

THE MIND OF MAHATMA GANDHI

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Compiled and edited by
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THIS BOOK
IS DEDICATED TO
MAHADEV DESAI
WHO SHOULD
HAVE COMPILED IT

FOREWORD*

TO THE REVISED EDITION

खुशीकी बात है कि श्री प्रभु और श्री राव संपादित 'गांधी-मानस' की नयी परिष्कृत और परिवर्धित आवृत्ति नवजीवन ट्रस्टकी तरफसे प्रकाशित की जा रही है। इसकी पहली दो आवृत्तियां बहुत लोकप्रिय हुई हैं और इसका अनुवाद कई भाषाओंमें हो चुका है।

इस नये संस्करणमें गांधीजीके अंतिमतम विचार भी उद्धृत किये हैं। इससे यह संस्करण अद्यतन बना है ऐसा कह सकते हैं।

“लोकोत्तराणां चेतांसि को हि विज्ञानुमर्हति” — लोकोत्तर पुरुषोंका मानस कौन जान सकते हैं, यह भवभूतिका वचन सर्वश्रुत है। गांधीजी लोकोत्तर पुरुष होते हुए भी उन्होंने अपना मन परिपूर्णतया लोगोंके सामने खोलकर रखा हुआ था। अपनी तरफसे उन्होंने कोई गूढ़ता नहीं रहने दी थी। फिर भी उनके जीवनका अंतिम-पर्व, जिसे मैंने स्वर्गारोहण-पर्व नाम दे रखा है, मुझे कबूल करना चाहिये, मेरे लिए गूढ़ ही रह गया है। बल्कि मुझे तो वह भगवान् कृष्णकी अंतिम लीलाके समान ही प्रतीत हुआ है। उस गूढ़को खोलनेके लिए तो गांधीजीको ही दुबारा आना पड़ेगा। लेकिन तबतक सत्यकी खोज करनेवाले सर्वोदय-साधकोंको गांधी-मानस समझनेमें यह किताब अवश्य मदद देगी ऐसी मैं आशा करता हूँ।

पड़ाव : किशनगंज
जिला — पूर्णिया
बिहार प्रदेश
१२-५-१९६६

वी. ग. व. व.
२५.५.६६

*Original in Hindi

FOREWORD

TO THE REVISED EDITION

It gives me pleasure that a new, revised and enlarged edition of *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, edited by Shri Prabhu and Shri Rao is being published by the Navajivan Trust. The first two editions of the book were very popular and its translations had appeared in several languages.

In the new edition, Gandhiji's thoughts in the last few years of his life have been incorporated. Thus the book has been brought uptodate.

"Who, indeed, can claim to know the mind of the Great?" is a famous saying of the Poet Bhavabhuti. Gandhiji was a great man; nevertheless, he had laid bare his mind in its fulness before the world. For his part, he had permitted no secrecy. Even so, I must confess, the last chapter of his life, which I have called the "Swargarohan Parva", or the chapter of the "Ascent to Heaven", remains a mystery to me. Indeed, in my eyes, it stands equal to the last phase of Lord Krishna's *leela*. To unravel its mystery, it may become necessary for Gandhiji himself to be born again. Till then, I hope, this book will be an essential help for understanding Gandhiji's mind to those who are striving to establish Sarvodaya and are searching for Truth.

Kishanganj
Purnea District
Bihar
May 12, 1966

Victory to the World !

VINOBA

FOREWORD

TO THE FIRST AND SECOND EDITIONS

Only now and again does there arise above the common level some rare spirit, who, having thought about God more deeply, reflects more clearly the divine purpose and puts into practice more courageously the divine guidance. The light of such shines like a strong beacon on a dark and disordered world. Gandhi belongs to the race of the prophets who have the courage of the heart, the courtesy of the spirit and the laughter of the unafraid. Through his life and teaching, he bears testimony to the values for which this country has stood for ages, faith in spirit, respect for its mysteries, the beauty of holiness, the acceptance of life's obligations, the validity of character, values which are neither national nor international, but universal.

There are many who dismiss Gandhi as a professional politician who bungles at critical moments. In one sense politics is a profession and the politician is one trained to transact public business in an efficient manner. There is another sense in which politics is a vocation and the politician is one who is conscious of a mission to save his people and inspire them with faith in God and love of humanity. Such a one may fail in the practical business of government, but succeed in filling his fellows with an invincible faith in their common cause. Gandhi is essentially a politician in the second sense. He has firm faith that we can build a world without poverty and unemployment, without wars and bloodshed, if only we get anchored in the world of spirit. He says: 'The world of tomorrow will be, must be, a society based on non-violence. It may seem a distant goal, an unpractical

utopia. But it is not in the least unobtainable, since it can be worked from here and now. An individual can adopt the way of life of the future—the non-violent way—without having to wait for others to do so. And if an individual can do it, cannot whole groups of individuals? Whole nations? Men often hesitate to make a beginning because they feel that the objective cannot be achieved in its entirety. This attitude of mind is precisely our greatest obstacle to progress—an obstacle that each man, if he only wills it, can clear away.¹

There is a common criticism that Gandhiji's vision outsoars his perception, that he proceeds on the comfortable but incorrect assumption that the world consists of saints. This is a misrepresentation of Gandhi's views. He knows that life at best is a long second best, a perpetual compromise between the ideal and the possible. The kingdom of God knows no compromise, no practical limitations. But here on earth there are the pitiless laws of nature. We have to build an ordered cosmos on the basis of human passions. Through effort and difficulty ideals struggle to realization. Though Gandhi feels that non-violence is the ideal of a civilized society, he permits the use of force. 'If one has not the courage, I want him to cultivate the art of killing and being killed, rather than in a cowardly manner flee from danger.'² 'The world is not entirely governed by logic. Life itself involves some kind of violence and we have to choose the path of least violence.'³ In the progress of societies three stages are marked, the first where the law of the jungle prevails, where we have violence and selfishness; the second where we have the rule of law and impartial justice with courts, police and prisons, and the third where we have non-violence and unselfishness, where love and law are one. The last is the goal of civilized humanity and it is brought nearer by the life and work of men like Gandhi.

¹ *Liberty*, London, 1931

² *Harijan*, 15-1-1938, p. 418

³ *Harijan*, 28-9-1934, p. 259

There is so much misunderstanding today about Gandhi's views and ways of thinking. This book, where we find collected together the relevant extracts from Gandhi's own writings on the central principles of his faith and conduct, will help to make Gandhi's position clearer to the modern mind.

Benares

4 April 1945

S. RADHAKRISHNAN

PREFACE

TO THE REVISED EDITION

To judge a great man or to decide his place in history, during his life-time, is not easy. Gandhiji had once observed: "Solon found it difficult to pronounce on a man's happiness during his life; how much more difficult it must be to adjudge on a man's greatness?"¹ On another occasion, speaking of himself, he had said: "It will be time enough to pronounce a verdict upon my work after my eyes are closed, and this tabernacle is consigned to the flames."² Nineteen years have now passed since he died—a martyr.

His death was mourned by the entire world, surely as no other death in human history. Grief at his passing away was enhanced by the manner of it. As one observer put it, his assassination would be remembered for centuries to come. The Hearst Press of the United States believed that its emotional impact upon the world at the time had no parallel in human annals since the similar martyrdom of Lincoln. It could aptly be said also of Gandhiji that "he now belongs to the Ages". One recalls Jawaharlal Nehru's memorable words on that sombre night: "A light has gone out of our lives", a sentiment which the *New York Times*, on January 31, 1948, underscored, adding that it remained for the inexorable hand of history to write down the rest. What, then, will history's verdict be on Gandhiji?

If contemporary opinion is to be regarded, Gandhiji would be placed side by side with the greatest men of human history. While E. M. Forster believed that he was likely to be considered the greatest man of our century, Arnold Toynbee is convinced that he certainly is. Dr. J. H. Holmes offered a more concrete estimate when he described Gandhiji as "the greatest Indian since Gautama the

¹ *Harijan*, 10-12-1938, p. 377

² *Young India*, 4-4-1929, p. 107

Buddha and the greatest man since Jesus Christ". In the hearts of his people, however, he is likely to be enshrined as the Mahatma, or, more endearingly, as Bapu—the 'Father of the Nation' who led it to freedom—through a bloodless revolution.

What attributes in Gandhiji constituted the fibre of greatness? He was not merely a great man; rather, he was both a great and a good man—a combination which, as a critic put it—is too rarely achieved and too little appreciated. One recalls George Bernard Shaw's laconic comment: "It is dangerous to be too good."

History will also record that this little man held tremendous—almost unparalleled—sway over the minds of his fellow men. Strangely, for that command was backed by no sanctions of temporal power or the might of arms. The clue to this enigma, if enigma it was, lay in Gandhiji's personal character and example, according to Lord Halifax who, as Viceroy during the days of Gandhiji's Salt Satyagraha, came very close to understanding him. It was that strength of character and of practice, as distinguished from precept, that enabled Gandhiji to influence so deeply the thought of his generation. Indeed, Prof. L. W. Grensted holds that Gandhiji's greatness lay not in his achievement, but in his character. To this Philip Noel-Baker would add purity of motive and selfless devotion to the cause in which he believed.

But this, surely, is not all the reason for Gandhiji's unprecedented ascendancy. Reginald Sorensen, to cite again contemporary testimony, believed that if Gandhiji exercised an influence beyond calculation not only in India but upon our modern age, it was because he bore witness to the power of the spirit and sought to implement it in his political activities. Here, then, in his reaffirmation of faith in the human spirit as well as in his introduction of spiritual values and techniques in mundane matters lies the uniqueness of Gandhiji. It is in this context that Dr. Francis Neilson says of Gandhiji: "A Diogenes in action, a St. Francis in humility, a Socrates in wisdom, he reveals to the world the utter paltriness of the

methods of the statesman who relies upon force to gain his end. In this contest, spiritual integrity triumphs over the physical opposition of the forces of the State.”¹

Gandhiji had pitted against the organized might of the State the pure strength of Non-Violence and Truth. And he had won. But the gospel of Non-violence and Truth which he had preached and practised was no new philosophy. He had indeed admitted, nay even claimed, that it was “as old as the hills”. Only, he had resurrected that philosophy and used it on a new plane. In conformity with his belief that Truth, as a living principle, has growth and as such, is bound to reveal to any earnest votary of it, newer and newer facets of it, he claimed to have discovered new dimensions and new potencies in the principle of Non-violence. True, that principle was only the obverse of that of Truth; but, for that very reason, inseparable from it. Gandhiji had made it his life-mission to bring home to his fellow men all over the world the conviction that there is no salvation for them, whether as individuals, communities or nations, unless they tread the path of Non-violence and Truth.

That path in politics implied—and implies—what one critic put as a revolution much more radical than any other, because it meant that we must change the whole order of personal or political life, or change nothing. But, for Gandhiji there was or could be no wall of separation between the personal and the public, the inner and the outer life of man. In this respect he stood clearly apart from and above most of the world’s politicians and statesmen. And therein lay the secret of his strength.

Gandhiji has himself observed that whatever power, whatever influence he had possessed or exercised had been derived from religion. Stafford Cripps had perhaps this fact in mind when he remarked that there has been no greater spiritual leader in the world of our time. *Manchester Guardian*, on January 31, 1948, summed up this aspect of Gandhiji’s personality when it wrote: “He is, above all, the man who revived and refreshed our sense of the mean-

¹ S. Radhakrishnan: *Mahatma Gandhi: Essays and Reflections on His Life and Work*, George Allen & Unwin, London, (1949), p. 537

ing and value of religion. Though he had not the all-comprehending intellect or the emotional riches which can construct a new philosophy or a new religion, yet the strength and purity of his moral urge were clearly derived from deep religious feelings. . . .”

The world today admittedly stands on the verge of disaster that may well be irretrievable. The reason: the constant ideological conflict, the fierce race hatreds that may lead to wars more terrible than any in history, and the ever-present threat of nuclear proliferation, involving the possibility of unimaginable destruction. Thus situated, *mankind has to make its choice — for its sheer survival — between the moral and the material forces.* The latter are leading humanity headlong on the road to self-annihilation. Gandhiji shows the other road, because he represents the moral forces. Maybe, it is no new road. But it is *the* road which the world has either forgotten so long or has not had the courage to take, and which it can now ignore only at the cost of its very existence.

Here in this book of his own words, the Mahatma speaks, and speaks for himself, with no interpreter between him and the reader, for none is necessary. Western people have sometimes expressed difficulty in understanding him. Note, for instance, Horace Alexander's statement that, in some ways, Gandhiji's deep metaphysical reasonings could be very baffling to the Anglo-Saxon mind. This volume offers basic material for understanding Gandhiji's mind on matters moral, social, political and spiritual. The advanced student of psychology, however, may need to probe deeper into the fundamental origins and sources of Gandhiji's motivation and conduct. To him this work can only be a source of reference.

The present revised and enlarged edition appears over twenty years after the earlier ones. It incorporates what they could not: the thought and philosophy of Gandhiji's crucial final years: 1946-48, when he rose to the transcendental heights of the human spirit—above caste, creed, party, and even country. Then he belonged, more truly than ever, to all humanity. For, in those years which led him inevitably to the supreme denouement of martyrdom

in defence of his faith, he preached and practised the religion of humanity, the religion by which alone mankind can survive. And it is because of this that the views and opinions which he had expressed in those last years assume for us and posterity a sanctity and a valedictory finality which make them indispensable to the comprehension of the totality of his mind. Their assimilation in the present volume has involved the introduction of some new chapters and the enlargement of several of the old ones.

Again, the earlier editions suffered somewhat from the exclusion largely, if not wholly, of most of his thoughts on problems of purely Indian interest. This was done on grounds both of limitations of space and the needs of the wider readership abroad. The defect needed to be remedied if the personality and vision of Gandhiji had to be understood in their fulness. In his eyes, India had a mission for the world, and he had wanted her to be at once the example and the exponent of his philosophy. This India of his dreams is now presented in an almost entirely new section: "Freedom and Democracy".

There has also been a noticeable re-organization and re-arrangement of the material which is calculated to fulfil better the aim and purpose of the book.

The compilers' grateful acknowledgments are due and are here made to the publishers of all the books, periodicals etc., from which the material has had to be drawn in the preparation of this volume. The compilers are deeply grateful to Acharya Vinoba Bhave for writing a foreword of great significance to the new edition.

It remains only to add a personal note. This preface appears, it will be seen, under the initials of only one of the compilers. For, the other is no more. R. K. Prabhu, life-long student and faithful exponent of Gandhiji's teachings, friend, philosopher and guide to many including his collaborator, passed away on January 4. This was before the preface to the new edition could be drawn up and the book itself published. For much of what has been written here, therefore, the responsibility is that of the

surviving compiler; likewise, the blame for that which ought to have been said, but is not. Yet, both responsibility and blame stand somewhat mitigated in that the present writer had recourse to the random jottings and lucubrations, as Prabhu called them, conveyed in his letters almost to the last day.

For thirty years the present writer has been privileged to enjoy Prabhu's friendship and, for quite some of them, active collaboration with him. No tribute that he can pay, therefore, may be adequate in his own eyes; for a similar reason, none that he pays may appear wholly impartial in those of the readers.

Prabhu was the originator of the "grand" Gandhi project which was to encompass this and several other volumes of Gandhiji's thought and philosophy. Only three, however, could materialize from the joint labours. Fortunately, Prabhu by himself produced several others big and small, all published by Navajivan. It is for the serious student of Gandhian literature to evaluate Prabhu's contribution to it. His collaborator must content himself with acknowledging his debt to one who gave him his inspiration, initiation and association.

Two very special and unsolicited observations as to Prabhu's place in the field of Gandhi compilations may, however, be cited here. One, Gandhiji's own, made to the compilers during a memorable interview on June 27, 1944, at the Nature Cure Clinic in Poona: "You are saturated with the spirit of my writings." The other by a notable philosopher-interpreter of Gandhiji: Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan who, in a personal message of condolence on Prabhu's death, wrote: "The publication of his work on Gandhiji will be a good reminder to us all of his main life-interest."

New Delhi

January 13, 1967

U. R. R.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST AND SECOND EDITIONS

‘GANDHI is an enigma.’ How often does one hear this said, not only by people who are critical of his utterances and doings, but even by those closely associated with him! This is the more surprising because, for the past fifty years, he has had almost no private life. He is scarcely ever alone, and works, talks, meditates, prays and eats in the company of his followers. When he sleeps, it is in the open air in a dormitory, seldom in a room of his own.

That there have been contradictions in his life Gandhiji has often admitted. Far from excusing himself for them, he has stated, ‘I have never made a fetish of consistency. I am a votary of truth and I must say what I feel and think at a given moment on the question, without regard to what I may have said before on it. . . . As my vision gets clearer, my views must grow clearer with daily practice.’¹ He believed that his inconsistencies have been merely apparent. ‘There is, I fancy, a method in my inconsistencies,’² he has written. Some of his inconsistencies spring from that spirit of compromise which is an inalienable part of his spiritual make-up. ‘All my life,’ he has remarked, ‘the very insistence on truth has taught me to appreciate the beauty of compromise.’³ It is his homage to truth that leads him to recognize the truth in the viewpoints of others. At the same time he holds that there are eternal principles which admit of no compromise and that one must be prepared to lay down one’s life in their practice.

The riddle of Gandhiji’s mind is the riddle of his soul. ‘*Le coeur a ses raisons, que la raison ne connaît point.*’⁴ His

¹ *Harijan*, 28-9-1934, p. 260.

² *Young India*, 13-2-1930, p. 52.

³ *An Autobiography*, p. 107

⁴ Pascal, *Pensees*, iv. 277; ‘The heart has its reasons which reason knows nothing of.’

philosophy has to be synthesized from scattered writings and utterances. He has never sat down to write a complete statement of his creed, and the very title of his autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, shows that he considers himself a mere seeker, ready and anxious to share his experiences with others, but claiming no finality for his own conclusions. He is often accused of irresponsibility for the way in which he speaks his mind at times when political expediency would seem to require silence or the expression of some other point of view from a national leader, but his answer to this charge is that it is every man's duty to express the truth as he sees it. If the motive is pure, no harm can result. 'I believe that if, in spite of the best of intentions, one is led into committing mistakes, they do not really result in harm to the world or, for the matter of that, any individual.'¹

In matters spiritual he claims to apply the method of trial and error, the experimental method of the scientist, and though he may have achieved no finality, yet, like an astronomer who is undeterred by his knowledge of Einstein's Theory of Relativity from stating that the mean distance of the Moon from the Earth is 238,857 miles, Gandhiji has reached a stage, after a life of 'experiments with truth', when his moral judgements are hard and assured. In his universe, he steers by the stars of Truth, Love and Labour. 'Having made a ceaseless effort to attain self-purification,' he says, 'I have developed some little capacity to hear 'the still small voice within'²; and that inner voice is, for him, Truth. Love and God are interchangeable terms: 'My goal is friendship with the world. . . .'³ 'I refuse to suspect human nature. It will, is bound to, respond to any noble and friendly action.'⁴ Lastly he believes 'there can never be too much emphasis placed upon work.'⁵ 'If all laboured for their bread and no more, then there would be enough

¹ *Young India*, 3-1-1929, p. 6.

² *The Epic Fast*, p. 34.

³ *Young India*, 10-3-1920, p. 5.

⁴ *Young India*, 4-8-1920, p. 5.

⁵ *Harijan*, 2-11-1935, p. 298.

food and leisure for all.’¹ Then, ‘our wants would be minimized, our food would be simple. We should then eat to live, not live to eat.’² Gandhiji is concerned with the salvation of the individual soul, and for him high thinking is not to be separated from plain living. ‘I do want growth, I do want self-determination, I do want freedom, but I want all these for the soul.’³

It may be of interest to record how this work came to be composed. Over a dozen years ago, the idea occurred to one of us of making a systematic collection of the ‘eternal verities’ expressed by Gandhiji in his writings and speeches and stringing them together so as to bring into relief the philosophical thought behind them, and afford an insight into the Gandhian philosophy of life. A plan of a dozen volumes was drawn up, embodying Gandhiji’s thoughts on such subjects as Truth, Non-violence, Satyagraha, Love, Faith, Non-possession, Freedom, Fasting, Prayer, *Brahmacharya*, Labour, Machinery, and so on, as well as a separate volume containing the gist of his thoughts on these subjects, and the work of collecting the material was begun. Within a few years, the task was found to be so vast that it was necessary to enlist the co-operation of a fellow-worker, and since then both of us have laboured at it without respite. Circumstances intervened during the last two years which obliged us to concentrate our attention on the last volume, the one containing the kernel of Gandhiji’s teachings as a whole, and this is what is now presented to the reader, though in a more condensed form than was originally planned.

The proofs of this work were submitted to and read by Gandhiji and we are sincerely thankful to him for his approval of our effort and to the Navajivan Trustees for permission to make use of his writings. We are also thankful to Shri Kanu Gandhi for allowing us to reproduce in this work one of his photographs of Gandhiji.

R. K. P.
U. R. R.

¹ *Harijan*, 29-6-1935, p. 156.

² *ibid*

³ *Young India*, 13-10-1921, p. 325.

CONTENTS

I: OF MYSELF

Chapter	Page
1. NEITHER SAINT NOR SINNER	3
2. MY MAHATMASHIP	11
3. I KNOW THE PATH	17
4. MY MISSION	23
5. THE INNER VOICE	31
6. MY FASTS	34
7. MY INCONSISTENCIES	37
8. MY WRITINGS	39

II: TRUTH

9. THE GOSPEL OF TRUTH	42
10. TRUTH IS GOD	47
11. TRUTH AND BEAUTY	55

III. FEARLESSNESS

12. THE GOSPEL OF FEARLESSNESS	59
--------------------------------	----

IV. FAITH

13. THE GOSPEL OF FAITH	63
14. THE MEANING OF GOD	70
15. RAMANAMA	80
16. PRAYER THE FOOD OF MY SOUL	84
17. MY HINDUISM IS NOT EXCLUSIVE	92
18. RELIGION AND POLITICS	101
19. TEMPLES AND IDOLATRY	104
20. THE CURSE OF UNTOUCHABILITY	107

V: NON-VIOLENCE

21. THE GOSPEL OF NON-VIOLENCE	112
22. THE POWER OF NON-VIOLENCE	121
23. TRAINING FOR NON-VIOLENCE	125
24. APPLICATION OF NON-VIOLENCE	128
25. THE NON-VIOLENT SOCIETY	130
26. THE NON-VIOLENT STATE	134
27. VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM	138

CONTENTS

xxiii

28. BETWEEN COWARDICE AND VIOLENCE	142
29. RESISTANCE TO AGGRESSION	145
30. THE CHOICE BEFORE INDIA	152
31. INDIA AND THE NON-VIOLENT WAY	157
32. INDIA AND THE VIOLENT WAY	161

VI: SATYAGRAHA

33. THE GOSPEL OF SATYAGRAHA	164
34. THE POWER OF SATYAGRAHA	173
35. NON-CO-OPERATION	179
36. FASTING AND SATYAGRAHA	184

VII: NON-POSSESSION

37. THE GOSPEL OF NON-POSSESSION	187
38. POVERTY AND RICHES	193
39. DARIDRANARAYAN	196

VIII: LABOUR

40. THE GOSPEL OF BREAD LABOUR	198
41. LABOUR AND CAPITAL	205
42. STRIKES : LEGITIMATE AND ILLEGITIMATE	211
43. TILLERS OF THE SOIL	217
44. CHOICE BEFORE LABOUR	221

IX: SARVODAYA

45. THE GOSPEL OF SARVODAYA	223
46. THE PHILOSOPHY OF YAJNA	228
47. THIS SATANIC CIVILIZATION	231
48. MAN <i>v.</i> MACHINE	234
49. THE CURSE OF INDUSTRIALIZATION	241
50. SOCIALISM	245
51. A SOCIALIST PATTERN OF SOCIETY	251
52. THE COMMUNIST CREED	253

X: TRUSTEESHIP

53. THE GOSPEL OF TRUSTEESHIP	257
54. NON-VIOLENT ECONOMY	263
55. ECONOMIC EQUALITY	266

XI: BRAHMACHARYA

56. THE GOSPEL OF BRAHMACHARYA	272
57. THE MARRIAGE IDEAL	278
58. CHILDREN	281
59. BIRTH-CONTROL	283
60. WOMAN'S STATUS AND ROLE IN SOCIETY	290
61. SEX EDUCATION	299
62. CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN	301
63. THE ASHRAM VOWS	303

XII: FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY

64. THE GOSPEL OF FREEDOM	311
65. WHAT SWARAJ MEANS TO ME	317
66. I AM NOT ANTI-BRITISH	322
67. RAMARAJYA	326
68. KASHMIR	327
69. FOREIGN SETTLEMENTS IN INDIA	328
70. INDIA AND PAKISTAN	331
71. INDIA'S MISSION	334
72. ESSENCE OF DEMOCRACY	338
73. THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS	349
74. POPULAR MINISTRIES	355
75. INDIA OF MY DREAMS	359
76. BACK TO THE VILLAGE	361
77. ALL-ROUND VILLAGE SERVICE	365
78. PANCHAYAT RAJ	371
79. EDUCATION	377
80. LINGUISTIC PROVINCES	385
81. COW PROTECTION	387
82. CO-OPERATIVE CATTLE FARMING	391
83. NATURE CURE	393
84. CORPORATE SANITATION	396
85. COMMUNAL HARMONY	398

XIII: SWADESHI

86. THE GOSPEL OF THE CHARKHA	403
87. MEANING OF SWADESHI	410

XIV: BROTHERHOOD

88. THE GOSPEL OF LOVE	416
89. ALL LIFE IS ONE	424
90. NO CULTURAL ISOLATION FOR ME	430
91. NATIONALISM v. INTERNATIONALISM	435
92. RACIALISM	440
93. WAR AND PEACE	442
94. NUCLEAR WAR	447
95. THE WAY TO PEACE	451
96. THE WORLD OF TOMORROW	458

XV: OBITER DICTA

SOURCES	461
SOURCE REFERENCES	498
CHRONOLOGY	501
GLOSSARY	527
INDEX	546
	554

THE MIND OF MAHATMA GANDHI

TO THE READER

I would like to say to the diligent reader of my writings and to others who are interested in them that I am not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent. In my search after Truth, I have discarded many ideas and learnt many new things. Old as I am in age, I have no feeling that I have ceased to grow inwardly or that my growth will stop at the dissolution of the flesh. What I am concerned with is my readiness to obey the call of Truth, my God, from moment to moment, and, therefore, when anybody finds any inconsistency between any two writings of mine, if he has still faith in my sanity, he would do well to choose the later of the two on the same subject.

M. K. GANDHI

Harijan, 29-4-1933, p. 2

I: OF MYSELF

1. NEITHER SAINT NOR SINNER

I THINK that the word 'saint' should be ruled out of present life. It is too sacred a word to be lightly applied to anybody, much less to one like myself who claims only to be a humble searcher after Truth, knows his limitations, makes mistakes, never hesitates to admit them when he makes them, and frankly confesses that he, like a scientist, is making experiments about some 'of the eternal verities' of life, but cannot even claim to be a scientist because he can show no tangible proof of scientific accuracy in his methods or such tangible results of his experiments as modern science demands.¹

To clothe me with sainthood is too early even if it is possible. I myself do not feel a saint in any shape or form. But I do feel I am a votary of Truth in spite of all my errors of unconscious omission and commission.

Policy of Truth

I am not a 'statesman in the garb of a saint'. But since Truth is the highest wisdom, sometimes my acts appear to be consistent with the highest statesmanship. But, I hope I have no policy in me save the policy of Truth and *ahimsa*. I will not sacrifice Truth and *ahimsa* even for the deliverance of my country or religion. That is as much as to say that neither can be so delivered.²

I see neither contradiction nor insanity in my life. It is true that, as a man cannot see his back, so can he not see his errors or insanity. But the sages have often likened a man of religion to a lunatic. I therefore hug the belief that I may not be insane and may be truly religious.

Which of the two I am in truth can only be decided after my death.³

It seems to me that I understand the ideal of truth better than that of *ahimsa*, and my experience tells me that if I let go my hold of truth, I shall never be able to solve the riddle of *ahimsa*. . . . In other words, perhaps, I have not the courage to follow the straight course. Both at bottom mean one and the same thing, for doubt is invariably the result of want or weakness of faith. 'Lord, give me faith' is, therefore, my prayer day and night.⁴

I claim to be a votary of truth from my childhood. It was the most natural thing to me. My prayerful search gave me the revealing maxim 'Truth is God', instead of the usual one 'God is Truth'. That maxim enables me to see God face to face as it were. I feel Him pervade every fibre of my being.⁵

Faith in Right

I remain an optimist, not that there is any evidence that I can give that right is going to prosper, but because of my unflinching faith that right must prosper in the end. . . . Our inspiration can come only from our faith that right must ultimately prevail.⁶

Somehow I am able to draw the noblest in mankind, and that is what enables me to maintain my faith in God and human nature.⁷

No Ascetic

I have never described myself as a *sannyasi*. *Sannyas* is made of sterner stuff. I regard myself as a house-holder, leading a humble life of service and, in common with my fellow-workers, living upon the charity of friends. . . . The life I am living is entirely very easy and very comfortable, if ease and comfort are a mental state. I have all I need without the slightest care of having to keep any personal treasures.⁸

My loin cloth is an organic evolution in my life. It came naturally, without effort, without premeditation.⁹

I hate privilege and monopoly. Whatever cannot be shared with the masses is taboo to me.¹⁰

It is wrong to call me an ascetic. The ideals that regulate my life are presented for acceptance by mankind in general. I have arrived at them by gradual evolution. Every step was thought out, well considered, and taken with greatest deliberation.

Both my continence and non-violence were derived from personal experience and became necessary in response to the calls of public duty. The isolated life I had to lead in South Africa, whether as a householder, legal practitioner, social reformer or politician, required for the due fulfilment of these duties the strictest regulation of sexual life and a rigid practice of non-violence and truth in human relations, whether with my own countrymen or with Europeans.¹¹

Mine is a life full of joy in the midst of incessant work. In not wanting to think of what to-morrow will bring for me, I feel as free as a bird. . . . The thought that I am ceaselessly and honestly struggling against the requirements of the flesh sustains me.¹²

Work without faith is like an attempt to reach the bottom of a bottomless pit.¹³

Shedding the Ego

I know that I have still before me a difficult path to traverse. I must reduce myself to zero. So long as man does not of his own free will put himself last among his fellow-creatures, there is no salvation for him. *Ahimsa* is the farthest limit of humility.¹⁴

If we could erase the 'I's' and the 'Mine's' from religion, politics, economics, etc., we shall soon be free and bring heaven upon earth.¹⁵

A drop in the ocean partakes of the greatness of its parent, although it is unconscious of it. But it is dried up as soon as it enters upon an existence independent of the ocean. We do not exaggerate when we say that life is a mere bubble.

A seeker after truth cannot afford to be an egotist. One who would sacrifice his life for others has hardly time to reserve for himself a place in the sun.¹⁶

There are limits to the capacity of an individual, and the moment he flatters himself that he can undertake all tasks, God is there to humble his pride. For myself, I am gifted with enough humility to look even to babes and sucklings for help.¹⁷

Fates decide my undertakings for me. I never go to see them. They come to me almost in spite of me. That has been my lot all my life long, in South Africa as well as ever since my return to India.¹⁸

Little Book Knowledge

I admit my limitations. I have no university education worth the name. My high school career was never above the average. I was thankful if I could pass my examinations. Distinction in the school was beyond my aspiration.¹⁹

During the days of my education I had read practically nothing outside textbooks, and after I launched into active life, I had very little time left me for reading. I cannot, therefore, claim much book knowledge. However, I believe I have not lost much because of this enforced restraint. On the contrary, the limited reading may be said to have enabled me thoroughly to digest what I did read.

Of these books, the one that brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life was *Unto This Last*. I translated it later into Gujarati, entitling it *Sarvodaya* (the welfare of all). I believe that I discovered some of my deepest convictions reflected in this great book of Ruskin, and that is why it so captivated me and made me transform my life.²⁰

I was living in South Africa then. It was the reading of *Unto This Last* on a railway journey to Durban, in 1904, when I was thirty-five, that made me decide to change my whole outward life. There is no other word for it, Ruskin's

words captivated me. I read the book in one go and lay awake all the following night, and I there and then decided to change my whole plan of life. Tolstoy I had read much earlier. He affected the inner being.²¹

Service of the Poor

The heart's earnest and pure desire is always fulfilled. In my own experience, I have often seen this rule being verified. Service of the poor has been my heart's desire and it has always thrown me amongst the poor and enabled me to identify myself with them.²²

I have always had a love for the poor all my life and in abundance. I could cite illustrations after illustrations from my past life that it was something innate in me. I have never felt that there was any difference between the poor and me. I have always felt towards them as my own kith and kin.²³

I have no desire for the perishable kingdom of earth. I am striving for the Kingdom of Heaven which is *moksha*. To attain my end it is not necessary for me to seek the shelter of a cave. I carry one about me, if I would but know it.

A cave-dweller can build castles in the air whereas a dweller in a palace, like Janak, has no castles to build. The cave-dweller who hovers round the world on the wings of thought has no peace. A Janak, though living in the midst of 'pomp and circumstance', may have peace that passeth understanding.

For me the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and therethrough of humanity. I want to identify myself with everything that lives.²⁴

My life is an indivisible whole, and all my activities run into one another; and they all have their rise in my insatiable love of mankind.²⁵

I am used to misrepresentation all my life. It is the lot of every public worker. He has to have a tough hide. Life would be burdensome if every misrepresentation had

to be answered and cleared. It is a rule of life with me never to explain misrepresentations except when the cause requires correction. This rule has saved much time and worry.²⁶

I have been known as a crank, faddist, mad man. Evidently the reputation is well deserved. For wherever I go, I draw to myself cranks, faddists and mad men.²⁷

Practical Dreamer

I believe in absolute oneness of God and, therefore, also of humanity. What though we have many bodies? We have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source. I cannot, therefore, detach myself from the wickedest soul (nor may I be denied identity with the most virtuous). Whether, therefore, I will or not, I must involve in my experiment the whole of my kind. Nor can I do without experiment. Life is but an endless series of experiments.²⁸

I must be taken with all my faults. I am a searcher after truth. My experiments I hold to be infinitely more important than the best-equipped Himalayan expeditions.²⁹

It has been my misfortune or good fortune to take the world by surprise. New experiments, or old experiments in new style, must sometimes engender misunderstanding.³⁰

I am indeed a practical dreamer. My dreams are not airy nothings. I want to convert my dreams into realities as far as possible.³¹

If any action of mine claimed to be spiritual is proved to be unpractical, it must be pronounced to be a failure. I do believe that the most spiritual act is the most practical in the true sense of the term.³²

My Fallibility

I claim to be a simple individual liable to err like any other fellow-mortal. I own, however, that I have humility enough in me to confess my errors and to retrace my steps. I own that I have an immovable faith in God and His goodness, and unconsumable passion for truth

and love. But, is that not what every person has latent in him?³³

Those who have at all followed my humble career even superficially cannot have failed to observe that not a single act of my life has been done to the injury of any individual or nation. . . . I claim no infallibility. I am conscious of having made Himalayan blunders, but I am not conscious of having made them intentionally or having even harboured enmity towards any person or nation, or any life, human or sub-human.³⁴

I have made the frankest admission of my many sins. But I do not carry their burden on my shoulders. If I am journeying Godward, as I feel I am, it is safe with me. For I feel the warmth of the sunshine of His presence.

My austerities, fastings and prayers are, I know, of no value if I rely upon them for reforming me. But they have an inestimable value, if they represent, as I hope they do, the yearnings of a soul striving to lay his weary head in the lap of his Maker.³⁵

Kinship with All

Whenever I see an erring man, I say to myself I have also erred; when I see a lustful man, I say to myself so was I once; and in this way, I feel kinship with every one in the world and feel that I cannot be happy without the humblest of us being happy.³⁶

I shall have to answer my God and my Maker if I give any one less than his due, but I am sure that He will bless me if He knows that I gave someone more than his due.³⁷

I am too conscious of the imperfections of the species to which I belong to be irritated against any single member thereof. My remedy is to deal with the wrong wherever I see it, not to hurt the wrong-doer, even as I would not like to be hurt for the wrongs I continually do.³⁸

I can truthfully say that I am slow to see the blemishes of fellow-beings, being myself full of them and, therefore, being in need of their charity. I have learnt not to judge

any one harshly and to make allowances for defects that I may detect.³⁹

Regard for Opponents

Differences of opinion should never mean hostility. If they did, my wife and I should be sworn enemies of one another. I do not know two persons in the world who had no difference of opinion, and as I am a follower of the *Gita*, I have always attempted to regard those who differ from me with the same affection as I have for my nearest and dearest.⁴⁰

It is to me a matter of perennial satisfaction that I retain generally the affection and trust of those whose principles and policies I oppose. The South Africans gave me personally their confidence and extended their friendship.

In spite of my denunciation of British policy and system, I enjoy the affection of thousands of Englishmen and women, and in spite of unqualified condemnation of modern materialistic civilization, the circle of European and American friends is ever widening. It is again a triumph of non-violence.⁴¹

I cannot intentionally hurt anything that lives, much less fellow-human beings, even though they may do the greatest wrong to me and mine.⁴²

It would be impossible for any person to point to a single act of mine during the past 50 years which could be proved to have been antagonistic to any person or community. I have never believed anyone to be my enemy. My faith demands that I should consider no one as such. I may not wish ill to anything that lives.⁴³

2. MY MAHATMASHIP

No Mahatma

I DO not feel like being one [a Mahatma]. But I do know that I am among the humblest of God's creatures.⁴⁴

Often the title has deeply pained me; and there is not a moment I can recall when it may be said to have tickled me.⁴⁵

My Mahatmaship is worthless. It is due to my outward activities, due to my politics which is the least part of me and is, therefore, evanescent. What is of abiding worth is my insistence on truth, non-violence and *brahmacharya* which is the real part of me. That part of me, however small, is not to be despised. It is my all. I prize even the failures and disillusionments which are but steps towards success.⁴⁶

The world knows so little of how much my so-called greatness depends upon the incessant toil and drudgery of silent, devoted, able and pure workers, men as well as women.⁴⁷

Truth to me is infinitely dearer than the 'mahatmaship', which is purely a burden. It is my knowledge of my limitations and my nothingness which has so far saved me from the oppressiveness of the 'mahatmaship'.⁴⁸

Sick of Adoration

I have become literally sick of the adoration of the unthinking multitude. I would feel certain of my ground if I was spat upon by them. Then there would be no need for confession of Himalayan and other miscalculations, no retracing, no re-arranging.⁴⁹

In the majority of cases, addresses presented to me contain adjectives which I am ill able to carry. Their use can do good neither to the writers nor to me. They unnecessarily humiliate me, for I have to confess that I do not

deserve them. When they are deserved, their use is superfluous. It cannot add to the strength of the qualities possessed by me. They may, if I am not on my guard, easily turn my head. The good that a man does is more often than not better left unsaid. Imitation is the sincerest flattery.⁵⁰

The Mahatma I must leave to his fate. Though a non-co-operator, I shall gladly subscribe to a Bill to make it criminal for anybody to call me Mahatma and to touch my feet. Where I can impose the law myself, i.e., at the Ashram, the practice is criminal.⁵¹

True Honour

The highest honour that my friends can do me is to enforce in their own lives the programme that I stand for or to resist me to their utmost if they do not believe in it.⁵²

It will be waste of good money to spend . . . on erecting a clay or metallic statue of the figure of a man who is himself made of clay and is more fragile than a bangle which can keep by preservation for a thousand years, whereas the human body disintegrates daily and undergoes final disintegration after the usual span of life. I have learnt from my Muslim friends, among whom I have passed the best part of my life, my dislike of statues and photographs of my figure. . . .

Let these lines serve as a warning to those who want to honour me by erecting statues and having portraits of my figure, that I heartily dislike these exhibitions. I shall deem it ample honour if those who believe in me will be good enough to promote the activities I stand for.⁵³

No 'Avatar'

I hold it to be a blasphemy to represent me as Shri Krishna. I claim to be a humble worker and no more among many in a great cause, which can only be injured rather than advanced by glorification of its leaders. A cause has the best chance of success when it is examined and followed on its own merits. Measures must always, in a progressive society, be held superior to men, who are after all imperfect instruments, working for their fulfilment.⁵⁴

The only virtue I want to claim is Truth and Non-violence. I lay no claim to superhuman powers. I want none. I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellow-beings wears, and am, therefore, as liable to err as any. My services have many limitations, but God has up to now blessed them in spite of the imperfections.⁵⁵

I lay claim to nothing exclusively divine in me. I do not claim prophetship. I am but a humble seeker after Truth and bent upon finding It. I count no sacrifice too great for the sake of seeing God face to face. The whole of my activity, whether it may be called social, political, humanitarian or ethical, is directed to that end.

And as I know that God is found more often in the lowliest of His creatures than in the high and mighty, I am struggling to reach the status of these. I cannot do so without their service. Hence my passion for the service of the suppressed classes. And as I cannot render this service without entering politics, I find myself in them. Thus I am no master. I am but a struggling, erring, humble servant of India and therethrough of humanity.⁵⁶

It is curious how we delude ourselves. We fancy that one can make the perishable body impregnable and we think it impossible to evoke the hidden powers of the soul. Well, I am engaged in trying to show, if I have any of these powers, that I am as frail a mortal as any of us and that I never had anything extraordinary about me nor have any now.⁵⁷

I do not consider myself worthy to be mentioned in the same breath with the race of prophets. I am a humble seeker after truth. I am impatient to realize myself, to attain *moksha* in this very existence. My national service is part of my training for freeing my soul from the bondage of flesh. Thus considered, my service may be regarded as purely selfish. I have no desire for the perishable kingdom of earth. I am striving for the Kingdom of Heaven which is *moksha*.⁵⁸

I claim to be no more than an average man with less than average ability. Nor can I claim any special merit

for such non-violence or continence as I have been able to reach with laborious research. I have not the shadow of a doubt that any man or woman can achieve what I have, if he or she would make the same effort and cultivate the same hope and faith.⁵⁹

Some of my correspondents seem to think that I can work wonders. Let me say as a devotee of truth that I have no such gift. All the power I may have comes from God. But He does not work directly. He works through His numberless agencies.⁶⁰

Awareness of Limitations

I consider myself to be a sagacious worker and my sagacity means no more and no less than a fine perception of my limitations. I hope I never travel beyond my limits. Certainly, I have never done so consciously.⁶¹

I am conscious of my own limitations. That consciousness is my only strength. Whatever I might have been able to do in my life has proceeded more than anything else out of the realization of my own limitations.⁶²

If I was what I want to be, the fast would not have been necessary. I would not then need to argue with anyone. My word would go straight home. Indeed, I would not even need to utter the word. The mere will on my part would suffice to produce the required effect. But I am painfully aware of my limitations.⁶³

I shall continue to confess blunders each time the people commit them. The only tyrant I accept in this world is the 'still small voice' within. And even though I have to face the prospect of a minority of one, I humbly believe I have the courage to be in such a hopeless minority.⁶⁴

I claim to be a fairly accurate student of human nature and vivisector of my own failings. I have discovered that man is superior to the system he propounds.⁶⁵

I hope there is no pride in me. I feel I recognize fully my weakness. But my faith in God and His strength and love is unshakable. I am like clay in the Potter's hands.⁶⁶

I have no desire for prestige anywhere. It is furniture required in courts of Kings. I am a servant of Mussalmans, Christians, Parsis and Jews as I am of Hindus. And a servant is in need of love, not prestige. That is assured to me so long as I remain a faithful servant.⁶⁷

Readiness for Martyrdom

There are certain things which you cannot escape all at once, even whilst you are avoiding them. This earthy case in which I am locked up is the bane of my life, but I am obliged to put up with it and even indulge it.⁶⁸

I implicitly believe in the truth of the saying that not a blade of grass moves but by His will. He will save it [my life] if He needs it for further service in this body. None can save it against His will.⁶⁹

Do not seek to protect me. The Most High is always there to protect us all. You may be sure that when my time is up, no one, not even the most renowned in the world, can stand between Him and me.⁷⁰

I must be true to my Maker, and the moment I feel that life is insupportable for me, I hope not to be found wanting. What better reparation can I do than willing surrender of the body that has ceased to evoke response and may be a hindrance to the discovery of the true way?⁷¹

I am not aching for martyrdom, but if it comes in my way in the prosecution of what I consider to be the supreme duty in defence of the faith I hold . . . I shall have earned it.⁷²

Whilst I prize the unbounded affection of the people, let them realize that my life is not worth keeping if anxiety to save it deflects the attention of the nation from the main purpose.⁷³

Assaults have been made on my life in the past, but God has spared me till now, and the assailants have repented for their action. But if someone were to shoot me in the belief that he was getting rid of a rascal, he would kill not the real Gandhi, but the one that appeared to him a rascal.⁷⁴

God alone is my protector. How can puny man, who is not sure even of his own tomorrow, presume to protect another? I am content to be under God's care. He may protect or destroy. I know He sometimes even destroys to protect.⁷⁵

I do not want to die . . . of a creeping paralysis of my faculties—a defeated man. An assassin's bullet may put an end to my life. I would welcome it. But I would love, above all, to fade out doing my duty with my last breath.⁷⁶

I am not afraid to die in my mission, if that is to be my fate.⁷⁷

Avoidance of Anger

I have learnt through bitter experience the one supreme lesson to conserve my anger, and as heat conserved is transmuted into energy, even so our anger controlled can be transmuted into a power which can move the world.⁷⁸

I spare neither friend nor foe when it is a question of departing from the code of honour.⁷⁹

It is not that I do not get angry. I do not give vent to anger. I cultivate the quality of patience as angerlessness, and, generally speaking, I succeed. But I only control my anger when it comes. How I find it possible to control it would be a useless question, for it is a habit that everyone must cultivate and must succeed in forming by constant practice.⁸⁰

If I had no sense of humour, I should long ago have committed suicide.⁸¹

I am an irrepressible optimist, because I believe in myself. That sounds very arrogant, doesn't it? But I say it from the depths of my humility. I believe in the supreme power of God. I believe in Truth and, therefore, I have no doubt in the future of this country or the future of humanity.

I am an optimist because I expect many things from myself. I have not got them, I know, as I am not yet a

perfect being. If I was one, I should not even need to reason with you. When I am a perfect being, I have simply to say the word and the nation will listen. I want to attain that perfection by service.⁸²

My philosophy, if I can be said to have any, excludes the possibility of harm to one's cause by outside agencies. The harm comes deservedly and only when the cause itself is bad or, being good, its champions are untrue, faint-hearted or unclean.⁸³

3. I KNOW THE PATH

I KNOW the path. It is straight and narrow. It is like the edge of a sword. I rejoice to walk on it. I weep when I slip. God's word is: 'He who strives never perishes.' I have implicit faith in that promise. Though, therefore, from my weakness I fail a thousand times, I will not lose faith, but hope that I shall see the Light when the flesh has been brought under perfect subjection, as some day it must.⁸⁴

My soul refuses to be satisfied so long as it is a helpless witness of a single wrong or a single misery. But it is not possible for me, a weak, frail, miserable being, to mend every wrong or to hold myself free of blame for all the wrong I see.

The spirit in me pulls one way, the flesh in me pulls in the opposite direction. There is freedom from the action of these two forces, but that freedom is attainable only by slow and painful stages.

I cannot attain freedom by a mechanical refusal to act, but only by intelligent action in a detached manner. This struggle resolves itself into an incessant crucifixion of the flesh so that the spirit may become entirely free.⁸⁵

Search for Truth

I am but a seeker after Truth. I claim to have found a way to it. I claim to be making a ceaseless effort to find it. But I admit that I have not yet found it. To find Truth completely is to realize oneself and one's destiny, i.e., to become perfect. I am painfully conscious of my imperfections, and therein lies all the strength I possess, because it is a rare thing for a man to know his own limitations.

If I was a perfect man, I own I should not feel the miseries of neighbours as I do. As a perfect man I should take note of them, prescribe a remedy, and compel adoption by the force of unchallengeable Truth in me. But as yet I only see as through a glass darkly and, therefore, have to carry conviction by slow and laborious processes, and then, too, not always with success.

That being so, I would be less than human if, with all my knowledge of avoidable misery pervading the land and of the sight of mere skeletons under the very shadow of the Lord of the Universe, I did not feel with and for all the suffering but dumb millions of India.⁸⁶

Trust in God

I am in the world feeling my way to light 'amid the encircling gloom'. I often err and miscalculate. . . . My trust is solely in God. And I trust men only because I trust God. If I had no God to rely upon, I should be like Timon, a hater of my species.⁸⁷

I will not be a traitor to God to please the whole world.⁸⁸

Whatever striking things I have done in life, I have not done prompted by reason but prompted by instinct, I would say, God.⁸⁹

I am a man of faith. My reliance is solely on God. One step is enough for me. The next step He will make clear to me when the time for it comes.⁹⁰

No Secrecy

I have no secret methods. I know no diplomacy save that of truth. I have no weapon but non-violence. I may be unconsciously led astray for a while, but not for all time.⁹¹

My life has been an open book. I have no secrets and I encourage no secrets.⁹²

I am but a poor struggling soul yearning to be wholly good—wholly truthful and wholly non-violent in thought, word and deed, but ever failing to reach the ideal which I know to be true. I admit it is a painful climb, but the pain of it is a positive pleasure for me. Each step upward makes me feel stronger and fit for the next.⁹³

When I think of my littleness and my limitations on the one hand and of the expectations raised about me on the other, I become dazed for the moment, but I come to myself as soon as I realize that these expectations are a tribute not to me, a curious mixture of Jekyll and Hyde, but to the incarnation, however imperfect but comparatively great in me, of the two priceless qualities of truth and non-violence. I must, therefore, not shirk the responsibility of giving what aid I can to fellow-seekers after truth from the West.⁹⁴

Guidance

I claim to have no infallible guidance or inspiration. So far as my experience goes, the claim to infallibility on the part of a human being would be untenable, seeing that inspiration too can come only to one who is free from the action of opposites, and it will be difficult to judge on a given occasion whether the claim to freedom from pairs of opposites is justified. The claim to infallibility would thus always be a most dangerous claim to make. This, however, does not leave us without any guidance whatsoever. The sum-total of the experience of the sages of the world is available to us and would be for all time to come.

Moreover, there are not many fundamental truths, but there is only one fundamental truth which is Truth

itself, otherwise known as Non-violence. Finite human being shall never know in its fulness Truth and Love which is in itself infinite. But we do know enough for our guidance. We shall err, and sometimes grievously, in our application. But man is a self-governing being, and self-government necessarily includes the power as much to commit errors as to set them right as often as they are made.⁹⁵

I deny being a visionary. I do not accept the claim of saintliness. I am of the earth, earthly. . . . I am prone to as many weaknesses as you are. But I have seen the world. I have lived in the world with my eyes open. I have gone through the most fiery ordeals that have fallen to the lot of man. I have gone through this discipline.⁹⁶

Self-sacrifice

I am asking my countrymen in India to follow no other gospel than the gospel of self-sacrifice which precedes every battle. Whether you belong to the school of violence or non-violence, you will still have to go through the fire of sacrifice and of discipline.⁹⁷

I want to declare to the world, although I have forfeited the regard of many friends in the West—and I must bow my head low; but even for their friendship or love, I must not suppress the voice of conscience,—the promptings of my inner basic nature today. There is something within me impelling me to cry out my agony. I have known humanity. I have studied something of psychology. Such a man knows exactly what it is. I do not mind how you describe it. That voice within tells me, “You have to stand against the whole world although you may have to stand alone. You have to stare in the face the whole world although the world may look at you with blood-shot eyes. Do not fear. Trust the little voice residing within your heart.” It says: “Forsake friends, wife and all; but testify to that for which you have lived and for which you have to die.”⁹⁸

No Defeatism

Defeat cannot dishearten me. It can only chasten me. . . . I know that God will guide me. Truth is superior to man's wisdom.⁹⁹

I have never lost my optimism. In seemingly darkest hours hope has burnt bright within me. I cannot kill the hope myself. I must say I cannot give an ocular demonstration to justify the hope. But there is no defeat in me.¹⁰⁰

I do not want to foresee the future. I am concerned with taking care of the present. God has given me no control over the moment following. . . .

Trust

It is true that I have often been let down. Many have deceived me and many have been found wanting. But I do not repent of my association with them. For I know how to non-co-operate, as I know how to co-operate. The most practical, the most dignified way of going on in the world is to take people at their word, when you have no positive reason to the contrary.¹⁰¹

I believe in trusting. Trust begets trust. Suspicion is foetid and only stinks. He who trusts has never yet lost in the world.¹⁰²

A breach of promise shakes me to my root, especially when I am in any way connected with the author of the breach. And if it cost my life which, after all, at the age of seventy has no insurance value, I should most willingly give it in order to secure due performance of a sacred and solemn promise.¹⁰³

To my knowledge, throughout my public and private career, I have never broken a promise.¹⁰⁴

My Leadership

They say I claim to understand human nature as no one else does. I believe I am certainly right, but if I do not believe in my rightness and my methods, I would be unfit to be at the helm of affairs.¹⁰⁵

As for my leadership, if I have it, it has not come for any seeking, it is a fruit of faithful service. A man can as little discard such leadership as he can the colour of his skin. And since I have become an integral part of the nation, it has to keep me with all my faults and shortcomings, of some of which I am painfully conscious and of many others of which candid critics, thanks be to them, never fail to remind me.¹⁰⁶

It is a bad carpenter who quarrels with his tools. It is a bad general who blames his men for faulty workmanship. I know I am not a bad general. I have wisdom enough to know my limitations. God will give me strength enough to declare my bankruptcy if such is to be my lot. He will perhaps take me away when I am no longer wanted for the work which I have been permitted to do for nearly half a century. But I do entertain the hope that there is yet work for me to do, that the darkness that seems to have enveloped me will disappear, and that, whether with another battle more brilliant than the Dandi March or without, India will come to her own demonstrably through non-violent means. I am praying for the light that will dispel the darkness. Let those who have a living faith in non-violence join me in the prayer.¹⁰⁷

My Work

I am content with the doing of the task in front of me. I do not worry about the why and wherefore of things. . . . Reason helps us to see that we should not dabble in things we cannot fathom.¹⁰⁸

My work will be finished if I succeed in carrying conviction to the human family, that every man or woman, however weak in body, is the guardian of his or her self-respect and liberty. This defence avails, though the whole world may be against the individual resister.¹⁰⁹

It will be time enough to pronounce a verdict upon my work after my eyes are closed and this tabernacle is consigned to the flames.¹¹⁰

4. MY MISSION

I AM not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist. The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the *rishis* and saints. It is meant for the common people as well. Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law—to the strength of the spirit.¹¹¹

There are more instances than one in my public life when, with the ability to retaliate, I have refrained from doing so and advised friends to do likewise. My life is dedicated to the spread of that doctrine. I read it in the teachings of all the greatest teachers of the world—Zoroaster, Mahavir, Daniel, Jesus, Muhammad, Nanak, and a host of others.¹¹²

Non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed.¹¹³

I am but an humble explorer of the science of non-violence. Its hidden depths sometimes stagger me just as much as they stagger fellow-workers.¹¹⁴

Mission of Satyagraha

My mission is to teach by example and precept under severe restraint the use of the matchless weapon of *satyagraha*, which is a direct corollary of non-violence and truth. I am anxious, indeed I am impatient, to demonstrate that there is no remedy for the many ills of life save that of non-violence. . . .

When I have become incapable of evil and when nothing harsh or haughty occupies, be it momentarily, my thought-world, then, and not till then, my non-violence will move all the hearts of all the world. I have placed before me and the reader no impossible ideal or ordeal. It is man's prerogative and birth-right.

We have lost the paradise only to regain it. If it takes time, then it is but a speck in the complete time-circle. The Divine Teacher of the *Gita* knew when he said that millions of our days are equal to only a day of Brahma.¹¹⁵

Ahimsa is my God, and Truth is my God. When I look for *ahimsa*, Truth says 'Find it out through me'. When I look for Truth, *ahimsa* says, 'Find it out through me'.¹¹⁶

I believe myself to be saturated with *ahimsa*—non-violence. *Ahimsa* and Truth are as my two lungs. I cannot live without them. But I see every moment with more and more clearness the immense power of *ahimsa* and the littleness of man. Even the forest-dweller cannot be entirely free from violence, in spite of his limitless compassion. With every breath he commits a certain amount of violence.

The body itself is a house of slaughter, and, therefore, *moksha* and Eternal Bliss consist in perfect deliverance from the body, and therefore, all pleasure, save the joy of *moksha*, is evanescent, imperfect. That being the case, we have to drink, in daily life, many a bitter draught of violence.¹¹⁷

Application of Non-violence

We have to make truth and non-violence not matters for mere individual practice but for practice by groups and communities and nations. That, at any rate, is my dream. I shall live and die in trying to realize it.

My faith helps me to discover new truths every day. *Ahimsa* is the attribute of the soul, and therefore, to be practised by everybody in all the affairs of life. If it cannot be practised in all departments, it has no practical value.¹¹⁸

My faith in truth and non-violence is ever growing, and as I am ever trying to follow them in my life, I too am growing every moment. I see new implications about them. I see them in a newer light every day and read in them a newer meaning.¹¹⁹

I have not conceived my mission to be that of a knight-errant wandering everywhere to deliver people from difficult situations. My humble occupation has been to show people how they can solve their own difficulties.¹²⁰

My imperfections and failures are as much a blessing from God as my successes and my talents, and I lay them both at His feet. Why should He have chosen me, an imperfect instrument, for such a mighty experiment? I think He deliberately did so. He had to serve the poor, dumb, ignorant millions. A perfect man might have been their despair. When they found that one with their failings was marching on towards *ahimsa*, they too had confidence in their own capacity. We should not have recognized a perfect man if he had come as our leader, and we might have driven him to a cave. May be he who follows me will be more perfect and you will be able to receive his message.¹²¹

No Gandhian Sect

I claim to be a humble servant of India and humanity, and would like to die in the discharge of such service. I have no desire to found a sect. I am really too ambitious to be satisfied with a sect for a following. For I represent no new truths. I endeavour to follow and represent Truth as I know it. I do claim to throw a new light on many an old truth.¹²²

I have presented no new principles, but tried to re-state old principles.¹²³

There is no such thing as 'Gandhism', and I do not want to leave any sect after me. I do not claim to have originated any new principle or doctrine. I have simply tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems. . . .

I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and Non-violence are as old as the hills. All I have done is to try experiments in both on as vast a scale as I could do. In doing so I have sometimes erred and learnt by my errors. Life and its problems have thus become to me so many experiments in the practice of truth and non-violence.

By instinct I have been truthful, but not non-violent. As a Jain *muni* once rightly said, I was not so much a votary of *ahimsa* as I was of truth, and I put the latter in the first place and the former in the second. For, as he put it, I was capable of sacrificing non-violence for the sake of truth. In fact, it was in the course of my pursuit of truth that I discovered non-violence.¹²⁴

I myself do not know what is the Gandhian hue. I am sailing on an uncharted sea. I have to take frequent soundings.¹²⁵

Gandhi-ites is no name worth having. Rather than that, why not *ahimsa*-ites? For Gandhi is a mixture of good and evil, weakness and strength, violence and non-violence, but *ahimsa* has no adulteration.¹²⁶

I come now to what is called the 'Gandhian' ideology and the means of propagating it. The propagation of truth and non-violence can be done less by books than by actually living those principles. Life truly lived is more than books.¹²⁷

There is always a saving clause about all my advice. No one need follow it unless it appeals to his head and heart. No one who has honestly the inner call need be deterred from obeying it because of my advice. In other words, it applies only to those who are not conscious of any inner call and who have faith in my riper experience and soundness of judgment.¹²⁸

Let Gandhism be destroyed if it stands for error. Truth and *ahimsa* will never be destroyed, but if Gandhism is another name for sectarianism, it deserves to be destroyed. If I were to know, after my death, that what I stood for had degenerated into sectarianism, I should be deeply pained. . . .

Let no one say that he is a follower of Gandhi. It is enough that I should be my own follower. I know what an inadequate follower I am of myself, for I cannot live up to the convictions I stand for. You are no followers but fellow-students, fellow-pilgrims, fellow-seekers, fellow workers.¹²⁹

If there is one Gandhi-ite, it must be me. I hope, however, that I am humble enough not to arrogate any such claim. Gandhi-ite means a worshipper of Gandhi. There must be a God to worship. But I have never arrogated to myself any such claim. Hence there can be no devotee of mine.¹³⁰

Law of Suffering

I . . . have ventured to place before India the ancient law of self-sacrifice. For *satyagraha* and its off-shoots, non-co-operation and civil resistance are nothing but new names for the law of suffering.

The *rishis*, who discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence, were greater geniuses than Newton. They were themselves greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realized their uselessness, and taught a weary world that its salvation lay not through violence but through non-violence.

Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission of the will of the evil-doer, but it means putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire to save his honour, his religion, his soul, and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its regeneration.

India's Role

And so I am not pleading for India to practise non-violence because it is weak. I want her to practise non-violence being conscious of her strength and power. No training in arms is required for realization of her strength. We seem to need it, because we seem to think that we are but a lump of flesh.

I want India to recognize that she has a soul that cannot perish and that can rise triumphant above every physical weakness and defy the physical combination of a whole world.¹³¹

If I can say so without arrogance and with due humility, my message and methods are, indeed, in their essentials for the whole world and it gives me keen satisfaction to know that it has already received a wonderful response in the hearts of a large and daily growing number of men and women of the West.¹³²

Brotherhood of Man

My mission is not merely brotherhood of Indian humanity. My mission is not merely freedom of India, though today it undoubtedly engrosses practically the whole of my life and whole of my time. But, through realization of freedom of India, I hope to realize and carry on the mission of brotherhood of man.

My patriotism is not an exclusive thing. It is all-embracing and I should reject that patriotism which sought to mount upon the distress or exploitation of other nationalities. The conception of my patriotism is nothing if it is not always, in every case without exception, consistent with the broadest good of humanity at large.

Not only that, but my religion and my patriotism derived from my religion embrace all life. I want to realize brotherhood or identity not merely with the beings called human, but I want to realize identity with all life, even with such things as crawl upon earth . . . because we claim descent from the same God, and that being so, all life in whatever form it appears must be essentially one.¹³³

I have that implicit faith in my mission that, if it succeeds—as it will succeed, it is bound to succeed—history will record it as a movement designed to knit all people in the world together, not as hostile to one another but as parts of one whole.¹³⁴

Non-violent Way

My aspiration is limited. God has not given me the power to guide the world on the path of non-violence. But I have imagined that He has chosen me as His instrument for presenting non-violence to India for dealing with her

many ills. The progress already made is great. But much more remains to be done.¹³⁵

Fraud and untruth today are stalking the world. I cannot sit as a helpless witness to such a situation. . . . If today I sit quiet and inactive, God will take me to task for not using up the treasure He had given me, in the midst of the conflagration that is enveloping the whole world.¹³⁶

I cannot impose my personal faith on others, never on a national organization. I can but try to convince the nation of its beauty and usefulness. . . .

It would be a calamity if by my obstinacy I stand in the way of the country's progress by other means, so long as they are not positively mischievous and harmful. I should, for instance, rise, even if I was alone, against methods of actual violence. But I have recognized that the nation has the right, if it so wills, to vindicate her freedom even by actual violence. Only, then India ceases to be the land of my love even though she be the land of my birth, even as I should take no pride in my mother if she went astray.¹³⁷

I have not the capacity for preaching universal non-violence. I preach, therefore, non-violence restricted strictly to the purpose of winning our freedom and, therefore, perhaps for preaching the regulation of international relations by non-violent means. Before I can preach universal non-violence, I must be wholly free from passions, I must be wholly incapable of sin.¹³⁸

My preaching and teaching are not emotional or unpractical, for I teach what is ancient and strive to practise what I preach. And I claim that what I practise is capable of being practised by all, because I am a very ordinary mortal open to the same temptations and liable to the same weaknesses as the least among us.¹³⁹

While I prate about Universal Non-violence, my experiment is confined to India. If it succeeds, the world will accept it without effort. There is, however, a big BUT. The pause does not worry me. My faith is brightest in the midst of impenetrable darkness.¹⁴⁰

Somehow or other, I dread a visit to Europe and America. Not that I distrust the peoples of these great continents any more than I distrust my own, but I distrust myself. I have no desire to go to the West in search of health or for sightseeing. I have no desire to deliver public speeches. I detest being lionized. I wonder if I shall ever again have the health to stand the awful strain of public speaking and public demonstrations.

If God ever sent me to the West, I should go there to penetrate the hearts of the masses, to have quiet talks with the youth of the West and have the privilege of meeting kindred spirits—lovers of peace at any price save that of truth.

But I feel that I have as yet no message to deliver personally to the West. I believe my message to be universal, but as yet I feel that I can best deliver it through my work in my own country. If I can show visible success in India, the delivery of the message becomes complete.

If I came to the conclusion that India had no use for my message, I should not care to go elsewhere in search of listeners even though I still retained faith in it. If I ventured out of India, I should do so because I have faith, though I cannot demonstrate it to the satisfaction of all, that the message is being received by India, be it ever so slowly.¹⁴¹

When I have become incapable of evil and when nothing harsh or haughty occupies, be it momentarily, my thought-world, then, and not till then, my non-violence, will move all the hearts of all the world.¹⁴²

Millions like me may fail to prove the truth in their own lives, that would be their failure, never of the eternal law.¹⁴³

5. THE INNER VOICE

THERE COME to us moments in life when about some things we need no proof from without. A little voice within us tells us, 'You are on the right track, move neither to your left nor right, but keep to the straight and narrow way.'¹⁴⁴

There are moments in your life when you must act, even though you cannot carry your best friends with you. The 'still small voice' within you must always be the final arbiter when there is a conflict of duty.¹⁴⁵

Having made a ceaseless effort to attain self-purification, I have developed some little capacity to hear correctly and clearly the 'still small voice within'.¹⁴⁶

I shall lose my usefulness the moment I stifle the still small voice within.¹⁴⁷

Penances with me are no mechanical acts. They are done in obedience to the inner voice.¹⁴⁸

No False Claim

A person falsely claiming to act under divine inspiration or the promptings of the inner voice without having any such, will fare worse than the one falsely claiming to act under the authority of an earthly sovereign. Whereas the latter on being exposed will escape with injury to his body, the former may perish body and soul together.

Charitable critics impute no fraud to me, but suggest that I am highly likely to be acting under some hallucination. The result for me, even then, will not be far different from what it would be if I was laying a false claim. A humble seeker that I claim to be has need to be most cautious and, to preserve the balance of mind, he has to reduce himself to zero before God will guide him. Let me not labour this point.

There is no question of hallucination. I have stated a simple scientific truth, thus to be tested by all who have the will and the patience to acquire the necessary qualifications, which are again incredibly simple to understand and easy enough to acquire where there is determination.¹⁴⁹

You have to believe no one but yourselves. You must try to listen to the inner voice, but if you will not have the expression "inner voice", you may use the expression "dictates of reason", which you should obey, and if you will not parade God, I have no doubt you will parade something else which in the end will prove to be God, for, fortunately, there is no one and nothing else but God in this universe.

I would also submit that it is not everyone claiming to act on the urge of the inner voice [who] has that urge. Like every other faculty, this faculty for listening to the still small voice within requires previous effort and training, perhaps much greater than what is required for the acquisition of any other faculty, and even if out of thousands of claimants only a few succeed in establishing their claim, it is well worth running the risk of having and tolerating doubtful claimants.¹⁵⁰

Nobody has to my knowledge questioned the possibility of the inner voice speaking to some, and it is a gain to the world even if one person's claim to speak under the authority of the inner voice can be really sustained. Many may make the claim, but not all will be able to substantiate it. But it cannot and ought not to be suppressed for the sake of preventing false claimants.

There is no danger whatsoever if many people could truthfully represent the inner voice. But, unfortunately, there is no remedy against hypocrisy. Virtue must not be suppressed because many will feign it. Men have always been found throughout the world claiming to speak for the inner voice. But no harm has yet overtaken the world through their shortlived activities.

Before one is able to listen to that voice, one has to go through a long and fairly severe course of training, and

when it is the inner voice that speaks, it is unmistakable. The world cannot be successfully fooled for all time. There is, therefore, no danger of anarchy setting in because a humble man like me will not be suppressed and will dare to claim the authority of the inner voice, when he believes that he has heard it.¹⁵¹

My claim to hear the voice of God is no new claim. Unfortunately, there is no way that I know of proving the claim except through results. God will not be God if He allowed Himself to be an object of proof by His creatures. But He does give His willing slave power to pass through the fiercest of ordeals.

I have been a willing slave to this most exacting Master for more than half a century. His voice has been increasingly audible as years have rolled by. He has never forsaken me even in my darkest hour. He has saved me often against myself and left me not a vestige of independence. The greater the surrender to Him, the greater has been my joy.¹⁵²

Voice of God

For me the Voice of God, of Conscience, of Truth, or the Inner Voice or 'the Still Small Voice' mean one and the same thing. I saw no form. I have never tried, for I have always believed God to be without form. But what I did hear was like a Voice from afar and yet quite near. It was as unmistakable as some human voice definitely speaking to me, and irresistible. I was not dreaming at the time I heard the Voice. The hearing of the Voice was preceded by a terrific struggle within me. Suddenly the Voice came upon me. I listened, made certain it was the Voice, and the struggle ceased. I was calm. The determination was made accordingly, the date and the hour of the fast were fixed. . . .

Could I give any further evidence that it was truly the Voice that I heard and that it was not an echo of my own heated imagination? I have no further evidence to convince the sceptic. He is free to say that it was all self-delusion or hallucination. It may well have been so. I can

offer no proof to the contrary. But I can say this, that not the unanimous verdict of the whole world against me could shake me from the belief that what I heard was the true Voice of God.

But some think that God himself is a creation of our own imagination. If that view holds good, then nothing is real, everything is of our own imagination. Even so, whilst my imagination dominates me, I can only act under its spell. Realest things are only relatively so. For me the Voice was more real than my own existence. It has never failed me, or for that matter, anyone else. And everyone who wills can hear the Voice. It is within everyone. But like everything else, it requires previous and definite preparation.¹⁵³

Rightly or wrongly, I know that I have no other resource as a *satyagrahi* than the assistance of God in every conceivable difficulty, and I would like it to be believed that what may appear to be inexplicable actions of mine are really due to inner promptings.

It may be a product of my heated imagination. If it is so, I prize that imagination as it has served me for a chequered life extending over a period of now nearly over fifty-five years, because I learned to rely consciously upon God before I was fifteen years old.¹⁵⁴

6. MY FASTS

MY RELIGION teaches me that, whenever there is distress which one cannot remove, one must fast and pray.¹⁵⁵

They [fasts] are a part of my being. I can as well do without my eyes, for instance, as I can without fasts. What the eyes are for the outer world, fasts are for the inner.¹⁵⁶

Higher Dictate

I am not responsible for these fasts. I do not undertake them for my amusement. I would not torture the flesh

for the love of fame. Though I bear joyfully the pangs of hunger and many other discomforts of fasting, let no one imagine that I do not suffer. These fasts are bearable only because they are imposed upon me by a higher Power and the capacity to bear the pain also comes from that Power.¹⁵⁷

I cannot fast at the dictation of anyone. Such fasts [unto death] cannot be lightly undertaken. They can conceivably be wholly undesirable. They cannot be undertaken out of anger. Anger is a short madness. I must, therefore, undertake the fast only when the still small voice within me calls for it.¹⁵⁸

Fasting and Prayer

A genuine fast cleanses the body, mind and soul. It crucifies the flesh and to that extent sets the soul free. A sincere prayer can work wonders. It is an intense longing of the soul for its even greater purity. Purity thus gained, when it is utilized for a noble purpose, becomes a prayer.¹⁵⁹

I believe that there is no prayer without fasting, and there is no real fast without prayer.¹⁶⁰

A complete fast is a complete and literal denial of self. It is the truest prayer. 'Take my life and let it be, always, only, all for Thee' is not, should not be, a mere lip or figurative expression. It has to be reckless and joyous giving without the least reservation. Abstention from food and even water is but the mere beginning, the least part of the surrender.¹⁶¹

Subduing the Flesh

Fasting, unless it is the result of God's grace, is useless starvation, if not much worse.¹⁶²

I know that the mental attitude is everything. Just as prayer may be merely a mechanical intonation as of a bird, so may a fast be a mere mechanical torture of the flesh. . . . Neither will touch the soul within.¹⁶³

It is my own firm belief that the strength of the soul grows in proportion as you subdue the flesh.¹⁶⁴

Mortification of the flesh is a necessity when the flesh rebels against one; it is a sin when the flesh has come under subjection and can be used as an instrument of service. In other words, there is no inherent merit in mortification of the flesh.¹⁶⁵

There is something in denying satisfaction of the flesh. It is not possible to see God face to face unless you crucify the flesh. It is one thing to do what belongs to it as a temple of God, and it is another to deny it what belongs to it as the body of flesh.¹⁶⁶

Out of the fulness of my own experience and that of fellow cranks, I say without hesitation, fast (1) if you are constipated, (2) if you are anaemic, (3) if you are feverish, (4) if you have indigestion, (5) if you have a headache, (6) if you are rheumatic, (7) if you are gouty, (8) if you are fretting and fuming, (9) if you are depressed, (10) if you are overjoyed; and you will avoid medical prescriptions and patent medicines.¹⁶⁷

Coercive Fasts

Fasting can only be resorted to against a lover, not to extort rights but to reform him, as when a son fasts for a father who drinks. My fast at Bombay and then at Bardoli was of that character. I fasted to reform those who loved me. But I will not fast to reform, say, General Dyer, who not only does not love me, but who regards himself as my enemy.¹⁶⁸

It is not to be denied that fasting can be really coercive. Such are fasts to attain a selfish object. A fast undertaken to wring money from a person or for fulfilling some such personal end would amount to the exercise of coercion or undue influence. I would unhesitatingly advocate resistance of such undue influence.

I have myself successfully resisted it in the fasts that have been undertaken or threatened against me. And, if it is argued that the dividing line between a selfish and an unselfish end is often very thin, I would urge that a person who regards the end of a fast to be selfish or otherwise base

should resolutely refuse to yield to it, even though the refusal may result in the death of the fasting person. If people will cultivate the habit of disregarding fasts which, in their opinion, are taken for unworthy ends, such fasts will be robbed of the taint of coercion and undue influence.

Like all human institutions, fasting can be both legitimately and illegitimately used. But as a great weapon in the armoury of *satyagraha*, it cannot be given up because of its possible abuse.¹⁶⁹

The weapon of fasting, I know, cannot be lightly wielded. It can easily savour of violence unless it is used by one skilled in the art. I claim to be such an artist in this subject.¹⁷⁰

7. MY INCONSISTENCIES

I DECLINE to be slave to precedents or practice I cannot understand or defend on a moral basis.¹⁷¹

I must admit my many inconsistencies. But since I am called 'Mahatma', I might well endorse Emerson's saying that 'Foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds.' There is, I fancy, a method in my inconsistencies. In my opinion, there is a consistency running through my seeming inconsistencies, as in Nature there is unity running through seeming diversity.¹⁷²

Friends who know me have certified that I am as much a moderate as I am an extremist and as much a conservative as I am a radical. Hence, perhaps, my good fortune to have friends among these extreme types of men. The mixture is due, I believe, to my view of *ahimsa*.

Inconsistency is only apparent. It appears so to many friends because of my responsiveness to varying circumstances. Seeming consistency may really be sheer obstinacy.¹⁷³

Fetish of Consistency

I am not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent. In my pursuit after Truth I have discarded many

ideas and learnt many new things. Old as I am in age, I have no feeling that I have ceased to grow inwardly or that my growth will stop with the dissolution of the flesh. What I am concerned with is my readiness to obey the call of Truth, my God, from moment to moment.¹⁷⁴

I have never made a fetish of consistency. I am a votary of Truth and I must say what I feel and think at a given moment on the question, without regard to what I may have said before on it. . . . As my vision gets clearer, my views must grow clearer with daily practice. Where I have deliberately altered an opinion, the change should be obvious, only, a careful eye would notice a gradual and imperceptible evolution.¹⁷⁵

My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements on a given question, but to be consistent with truth as it may present itself to me at a given moment. The result has been that I have grown from truth to truth.¹⁷⁶

No Expedience

I have sacrificed no principle to gain a political advantage.¹⁷⁷

I am not aware of having done a single thing in my life as a matter of expedience. I have ever held that the highest morality is also the highest expedience.¹⁷⁸

Compromise

I have often been charged with having an unyielding nature. I have been told that I would not bow to the decisions of the majority. I have been accused of being autocratic. . . . I have never been able to subscribe to the charge of obstinacy or autocracy. On the contrary, I pride myself on my yielding nature in non-vital matters. I detest autocracy. Valuing my freedom and independence, I equally cherish them for others. I have no desire to carry a single soul with me if I cannot appeal to his or her reason.

My unconventionality I carry to the point of rejecting the divinity of the oldest Shastras if they cannot convince my reason. But I have found by experience that, if I wish

to live in society and still retain my independence, I must limit the points of utter independence to matters of first-rate importance. In all others which do not involve a departure from one's personal religion or moral code, one must yield to the majority.¹⁷⁹

All my life through, the very insistence on truth has taught me to appreciate the beauty of compromise. I saw in later life that this spirit was an essential part of *satyagraha*. It has often meant endangering my life and incurring the displeasure of friends. But truth is hard as adamant and tender as a blossom.¹⁸⁰

Human life is a series of compromises, and it is not always easy to achieve in practice what one has found to be true in theory.¹⁸¹

There are eternal principles which admit of no compromise, and one must be prepared to lay down one's life in the practice of them.¹⁸²

8. MY WRITINGS

MY HESITANCY in speech, which was once an annoyance, is now a pleasure. Its greatest benefit has been that it has taught me the economy of words. I have naturally formed the habit of restraining my thoughts. And I can now give myself the certificate that a thoughtless word hardly ever escapes my tongue or pen. I do not recollect ever having had to regret anything in my speech or writing. I have thus been spared many a mishap and waste of time.¹⁸³

In the very first month of *Indian Opinion*, I realized that the sole aim of journalism should be service. The newspaper press is a great power, but just as an unchained torrent of water submerges whole countrysides and devastates crops, even so an uncontrolled pen serves but to destroy. If the control is from without, it proves more poi-

sonous than want of control. It can be profitable only when exercised from within. If this line of reasoning is correct, how many of the journals in the world would stand the test? But who would stop those that are useless? The useful and the useless must, like good and evil generally, go on together, and man must make his choice.¹⁸⁴

There can be no room for untruth in my writings, because it is my unshakable belief that there is no religion other than truth and because I am capable of rejecting aught obtained at the cost of truth.

My writings cannot but be free from hatred towards any individual because it is my firm belief that it is love that sustains the earth.¹⁸⁵

My Journalism

I have taken up journalism not for its sake but merely as an aid to what I have conceived to be my mission in life. My mission is to teach by example and precept under severe restraint the use of the matchless weapon of *satyagraha* which is a direct corollary of non-violence and truth. . . . To be true to my faith, therefore, I may not write in anger or malice. I may not write idly. I may not write merely to excite passion.

The reader can have no idea of the restraint I have to exercise from week to week in the choice of topics and my vocabulary. It is a training for me. It enables me to peep into myself and to make discoveries of my weaknesses. Often my vanity dictates a smart expression or my anger a harsh adjective. It is a terrible ordeal but a fine exercise to remove these weeds.¹⁸⁶

I write just as the Spirit moves me at the time of writing. I do not claim to know definitely that all conscious thought and action on my part is directed by the Spirit. But on an examination of the greatest steps that I have taken in my life, as also of those that may be regarded as the least, I think it will not be improper to say that all of them were directed by the Spirit.¹⁸⁷

As for giving ideas, I have some originality. But writing is a by-product; I write to propagate my ideas. Journalism is not my profession.¹⁸⁸

What I have done will endure, not what I have said or written.¹⁸⁹

II: TRUTH

9. THE GOSPEL OF TRUTH

WHAT . . . is Truth? A difficult question; but I have solved it for myself by saying that it is what the voice within tells you. How then, you ask, [do] different people think of different and contrary truths? Well, seeing that the human mind works through innumerable media and that the evolution of the human mind is not the same for all, it follows that what may be truth for one may be untruth for another, and hence those who have made these experiments have come to the conclusion that there are certain conditions to be observed in making those experiments. . . .

It is because we have at the present moment everybody claiming the right of conscience without going through any discipline whatsoever, and there is so much untruth being delivered to a bewildered world. All that I can in true humility present to you is that Truth is not to be found by anybody who has not got an abundant sense of humility. If you would swim on the bosom of the ocean of Truth, you must reduce yourself to a zero.¹

Truth and Love—*ahimsa*--is the only thing that counts. Where this is present, everything rights itself in the end. This is a law to which there is no exception.²

Sovereign Principle

For me truth is the sovereign principle, which includes numerous other principles. This truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also, and not only the relative truth of our conception, but the Absolute Truth, the Eternal Principle, that is God. There are innumerable definitions of God, because His manifestations are innumerable. They overwhelm me with wonder and awe and for a moment stun me.

But I worship God as Truth only. I have not yet found Him, but I am seeking after Him. I am prepared to sacrifice the things dearest to me in pursuit of this quest. Even if the sacrifice demanded be my very life, I hope I may be prepared to give it. But as long as I have not realized this Absolute Truth, so long must I hold by the relative truth as I have conceived it. That relative truth must, meanwhile, be my beacon, my shield and buckler. Though this path is strait and narrow and sharp as the razor's edge, for me it has been the quickest and easiest. Even my Himalayan blunders have seemed trifling to me because I have kept strictly to this path. For the path has saved me from coming to grief, and I have gone forward according to my light. Often in my progress I have had faint glimpses of the Absolute Truth, God, and daily the conviction is growing upon me that He alone is real and all else is unreal.

Quest for Truth

. . . The further conviction has been growing upon me that whatever is possible for me is possible even for a child, and I have found sound reasons for saying so. The instruments for the quest of Truth are as simple as they are difficult. They may appear quite impossible to an arrogant person, and quite possible to an innocent child.

The seeker after Truth should be humbler than the dust. The world crushes the dust under its feet, but the seeker after Truth should so humble himself that even the dust could crush him. Only then, and not till then, will he have a glimpse of Truth.³

Truth is like a vast tree, which yields more and more fruit the more you nurture it. The deeper the search in the mine of truth the richer the discovery of the gems buried there, in the shape of openings for an ever greater variety of service.⁴

I think it is wrong to expect certainties in this world, where all else but God that is Truth is an uncertainty. All that appears and happens about and around is uncertain, transient. But there is a Supreme Being hidden therein

as a Certainty, and one would be blessed if one could catch a glimpse of that certainty and hitch one's waggon to it. The quest for that Truth is the *summum bonum* of life.⁵

In the march towards Truth, anger, selfishness, hatred, etc., naturally give way, for otherwise Truth would be impossible to attain. A man who is swayed by passions may have good enough intentions, may be truthful in word, but he will never find the Truth. A successful search for Truth means complete deliverance from the dual throng such as of love and hate, happiness and misery.⁶

Vision of Truth

To see the universal and all-pervading spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why my devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means.⁷

My uniform experience has convinced me that there is no other God than Truth. . . . The little fleeting glimpses . . . that I have been able to have of Truth can hardly convey an idea of the indescribable lustre of Truth, a million times more intense than that of the sun we daily see with our eyes.⁸

In fact, what I have caught is only the faintest gleam of that mighty effulgence. But this much I can say with assurance, as a result of all my experiments, that a perfect vision of Truth can only follow a complete realization of *ahimsa*.⁹

Truth resides in every human heart, and one has to search for it there, and to be guided by truth as one sees it. But no one has a right to coerce others to act according to his own view of truth.¹⁰

Absolute Truth

It is not given to man to know the whole Truth. His duty lies in living up to the truth as he sees it, and

in doing so, to resort to the purest means, i.e., to non-violence.¹¹

God alone knows absolute truth. Therefore, I have often said, Truth is God. It follows that man, a finite being, cannot know absolute truth.¹²

Nobody in this world possesses absolute truth. This is God's attribute alone. Relative truth is all we know. Therefore, we can only follow the truth as we see it. Such pursuit of truth cannot lead anyone astray.¹³

Truth and I

I have in my life never been guilty of saying things I did not mean—my nature is to go straight to the heart and, if often I fail in doing so for the time being, I know that Truth will ultimately make itself heard and felt, as it has often done in my experience.¹⁴

Let hundreds like me perish, but let Truth prevail. Let us not reduce the standards of Truth even by a hair's breadth for judging erring mortals like myself.¹⁵

In judging myself I shall try to be as harsh as truth, as I want others also to be. Measuring myself by that standard I must exclaim with Surdas,

Where is there a wretch
So wicked and loathsome as I?
I have forsaken my Maker,
So faithless have I been.¹⁶

My Errors

I may be a despicable person, but when Truth speaks through me, I am invincible.¹⁷

I am devoted to none but Truth and I owe no discipline to anybody but Truth.¹⁸

I have no God to serve but Truth.¹⁹

I have no strength except what comes from insistence on truth. Non-violence, too, springs from the same insistence.²⁰

I am a humble but very earnest seeker after Truth. And in my search, I take all fellow-seekers in uttermost

confidence so that I may know my mistakes and correct them. I confess that I have often erred in my estimates and judgments. . . . And inasmuch as in every case I retraced my steps, no permanent harm was done. On the contrary, the fundamental truth of non-violence has been made infinitely more manifest than it ever has been, and the country has in no way been permanently injured.²¹

I am a learner myself, I have no axe to grind, and wherever I see a truth, I take it up and try to act up to it.²²

I believe that, if in spite of the best of intentions, one is led into committing mistakes, they do not really result in harm to the world or, for the matter of that, any individual. God always saves the world from the consequences of unintended errors of men who live in fear of Him.

Those who are likely to be misled by my example would have gone that way all the same even if they had not known of my action. For, in the final analysis, a man is guided in his conduct by his own inner promptings, though the example of others might sometimes *seem* to guide him. But be it as it may, I know that the world has never had to suffer on account of my errors because they were all due to my ignorance. It is my firm belief that not one of my known errors was wilful.²³

Indeed, what may appear to be an obvious error to one may appear to another as pure wisdom. He cannot help himself even if he is under a hallucination. Truly as Tulsidas said: 'Even though there never is silver in mother o' pearl nor water in the sunbeams, while the illusion of silver in the shining shell or that of water in the beam lasts, no power on earth can shake the deluded man free from the spell.' Even so must it be with men like me who, it may be, are labouring under a great hallucination. Surely God will pardon them and the world should bear with them. Truth will assert itself in the end.²⁴

Truth never damages a cause that is just.²⁵

Life is an aspiration. Its mission is to strive after perfection, which is self-realization. The ideal must not

be lowered because of our weaknesses or imperfections. I am painfully conscious of both in me. The silent cry daily goes out to Truth to help me to remove these weaknesses and imperfections of mine.²⁶

No Abandonment of Truth

Believe me when I tell you, after 60 years of personal experience, that the only real misfortune is to abandon the path of truth. If you but realize this, your one prayer to God will always be to enable you to put up, without flinching, with any number of trials and hardships that may fall to your lot in the pursuit of truth.²⁷

Truth alone will endure, all the rest will be swept away before the tide of time. I must, therefore, continue to bear testimony to Truth even if I am forsaken by all. Mine may today be a voice in the wilderness, but it will be heard when all other voices are silenced, if it is the voice of Truth.²⁸

A man of faith will remain steadfast to truth, even though the whole world might appear to be enveloped in falsehood.²⁹

When it is relevant, truth has to be uttered, however unpleasant it may be. Irrelevance is always untruth and should never be uttered.³⁰

10. TRUTH IS GOD

God Is

THERE is an indefinable mysterious Power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. It is this unseen Power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses. But it is possible to reason out the existence of God to a limited extent.

I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is ever-changing, ever-dying, there is underlying all that change a Living Power that is changeless, that holds all

together, that creates, dissolves, and re-creates. That informing Power or Spirit is God. And since nothing else I see merely through the senses can or will persist, He alone is.

And is this Power benevolent or malevolent? I see it as purely benevolent. For I can see that in the midst of death life persists, in the midst of untruth truth persists, in the midst of darkness light persists. Hence I gather that God is Life, Truth, Light. He is Love. He is the Supreme Good.

I confess . . . that I have no argument to convince . . . through reason. Faith transcends reason. All I can advise . . . is not to attempt the impossible. I cannot account for the existence of evil by any rational method. To want to do so is to be co-equal with God. I am, therefore, humble enough to recognize evil as such; and I call God long-suffering and patient precisely because He permits evil in the world. I know that He has no evil in Him and yet if there is evil, He is the author of it and yet untouched by it.

I know, too, that I shall never know God if I do not wrestle with and against evil even at the cost of life itself. I am fortified in the belief by my own humble and limited experience. The purer I try to become the nearer to God I feel myself to be. How much more should I be near to Him when my faith is not a mere apology, as it is today, but has become as immovable as the Himalayas and as white and bright as the snows on their peaks?³¹

My Faith

I can easily put up with the denial of the world, but any denial by me of my God is unthinkable.³²

I know that I can do nothing. God can do everything. O God, make me Thy fit instrument and use me as Thou wilt!³³

I have not seen Him, neither have I known Him. I have made the world's faith in God my own and as my faith is ineffaceable, I regard that faith as amounting to

experience. However, as it may be said that to describe faith as experience is to tamper with truth, it may perhaps be more correct to say that I have no word for characterizing my belief in God.³⁴

I am surer of His existence than of the fact that you and I are sitting in this room. Then I can also testify that I may live without air and water but not without Him. You may pluck out my eyes, but that cannot kill me. You may chop off my nose, but that will not kill me. But blast my belief in God, and I am dead.

You may call this a superstition, but I confess it is a superstition that I hug, even as I used to hug the name of Rama in my childhood when there was any cause of danger or alarm. That was what an old nurse had taught me.³⁵

I believe that we can all become messengers of God, if we cease to fear man and seek only God's Truth. I do believe I am seeking only God's Truth and have lost all fear of man.

. . . I have no special revelation of God's will. My firm belief is that He reveals Himself daily to every human being, but we shut our ears to the 'still small voice'. We shut our eyes to the Pillar of Fire in front of us. I *realize* His omnipresence.³⁶

Some of my correspondents seem to think that I can work wonders. Let me say as a devotee of truth that I have no such gift. All the power I may have comes from God. But He does not work directly. He works through His numberless agencies.³⁷

Nature of God

To me God is Truth and Love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness. God is the source of Light and Life and yet He is above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist. For in His boundless love God permits the atheist to live. He is the searcher of hearts. He transcends speech and reason. He knows us and our hearts better than we do ourselves.

He does not take us at our word, for He knows that we often do not mean it, some knowingly and others unknowingly.

He is a personal God to those who need His personal presence. He is embodied to those who need His touch. He is the purest essence. He simply is to those who have faith. He is all things to all men. He is in us and yet above and beyond us. . . .

He cannot cease to be because hideous immoralities or inhuman brutalities are committed in His name. He is long-suffering. He is patient but He is also terrible. He is the most exacting personage in the world and the world to come. He metes out the same measure to us that we mete out to our neighbours—men and brutes.

With Him ignorance is no excuse. And withal He is ever forgiving, for He always gives us the chance to repent.

He is the greatest democrat the world knows, for He leaves us 'unfettered' to make our own choice between evil and good. He is the greatest tyrant ever known, for He often dashes the cup from our lips and under cover of free will leaves us a margin so wholly inadequate as to provide only mirth for Himself at our expense.

Therefore it is that Hinduism calls it all His sport—*lila*, or calls it all an illusion—*maya*. We are *not*, He alone *Is*. And if we will be, we must eternally sing His praise and do His will. Let us dance to the tune of His *bansi*—lute, and all would be well.³⁸

God is the hardest taskmaster I have known on this earth, and He tries you through and through. And when you find that your faith is failing or your body is failing you and you are sinking, He comes to your assistance somehow or other and proves to you that you must not lose your faith and that He is always at your beck and call, but on His terms, not on your terms. So I have found. I cannot really recall a single instance when, at the eleventh hour, He has forsaken me.³⁹

In my early youth I was taught to repeat what in Hindu scriptures are known as one thousand names of God. But these one thousand names of God were by no means exhaustive. We believe—and I think it is the truth—that God has as many names as there are creatures and, therefore, we also say that God is nameless and, since God has many forms, we also consider Him formless, and since He speaks to us through many tongues, we consider Him to be speechless and so on. And so when I came to study Islam, I found that Islam too had many names for God.

I would say with those who say God is Love, God is Love. But deep down in me I used to say that though God may be Love, God is Truth, above all. If it is possible for the human tongue to give the fullest description of God, I have come to the conclusion that, for myself, God is Truth.

But two years ago I went a step further and said that Truth is God. You will see the fine distinction between the two statements, viz., that God is Truth and Truth is God. And I came to the conclusion after a continuous and relentless search after Truth which began nearly fifty years ago.

I then found that the nearest approach to Truth was through love. But I also found that love has many meanings in the English language at least and that human love in the sense of passion could become a degrading thing also. I found too that love in the sense of *ahimsa* had only a limited number of votaries in the world. But I never found a double meaning in connexion with truth and not even atheists had demurred to the necessity or power of truth.

But, in their passion for discovering truth, the atheists have not hesitated to deny the very existence of God—from their own point of view, rightly. And it was because of this reasoning that I saw that, rather than say that God is Truth, I should say that Truth is God.⁴⁰

God is Truth, but God is many other things also. That is why I say Truth is God. . . . Only remember that Truth

12638

is not one of the many qualities that we name. It is the living embodiment of God, it is the only Life, and I identify Truth with the fullest life, and that is how it becomes a concrete thing, for God is His whole creation, the whole Existence, and service of all that exists—Truth—is service of God.⁴¹

Perfection is the attribute of the Almighty, and yet what a great democrat He is! What an amount of wrong and humbug He suffers on our part! He even suffers us insignificant creatures of His to question His very existence, though He is in every atom about us, around us and within us. But He has reserved to Himself the right of becoming manifest to whomsoever He chooses. He is a Being without hands and feet and other organs, yet he can see Him to whom He chooses to reveal Himself.⁴²

God through Service

If I did not feel the presence of God within me, I see so much of misery and disappointment every day that I would be a raving maniac and my destination would be the Hooghli.⁴³

If I am to identify myself with the grief of the least in India, aye, if I have the power, the least in the world, let me identify myself with the sins of the little ones who are under my care. And so doing in all humility, I hope some day to see God—Truth—face to face.⁴⁴

I am endeavouring to see God through service of humanity, for I know that God is neither in heaven, nor down below, but in every one.⁴⁵

I am a part and parcel of the whole, and I cannot find Him apart from the rest of humanity. My countrymen are my nearest neighbours. They have become so helpless, so resourceless, so inert that I must concentrate on serving them. If I could persuade myself that I should find Him in a Himalayan cave, I would proceed there immediately. But I know that I cannot find Him apart from humanity.⁴⁶

I claim to know my millions. All the 24 hours of the day I am with them. They are my first care and last because

I recognize no God except the God that is to be found in the hearts of the dumb millions. They do not recognize His presence; I do. And I worship the God that is Truth or Truth which is God through the service of these millions.⁴⁷

Guide and Protector

I must go . . . with God as my only guide. He is a jealous Lord. He will allow no one to share His authority. One has, therefore, to appear before Him in all one's weakness, empty-handed and in a spirit of full surrender, and then He enables you to stand before a whole world and protects you from all harm.⁴⁸

I have learned this one lesson—that what is impossible with man is child's play with God and if we have faith in that Divinity which presides on the destiny of the meanest of His creation, I have no doubt that all things are possible; and in that final hope, I live and pass my time and endeavour to obey His will.⁴⁹

Even in darkest despair, where there seems to be no helper and no comfort in the wide, wide world, His Name inspires us with strength and puts all doubts and despair to flight. The sky may be overcast today with clouds, but a fervent prayer to Him is enough to dispel them. It is because of prayer that I have known no disappointment.

. . . I have known no despair. Why then should you give way to it? Let us pray that He may cleanse our hearts of pettinesses, meannesses and deceit and He will surely answer our prayers. Many I know have always turned to that unfailing source of strength.⁵⁰

I have seen and believe that God never appears to you in person, but in action which can only account for your deliverance in your darkest hour.⁵¹

Individual worship cannot be described in words. It goes on continuously and even unconsciously. There is not a moment when I do not feel the presence of a Witness whose eye misses nothing and with whom I strive to keep in tune.

I have never found Him lacking in response. I have found Him nearest at hand when the horizon seemed darkest in my ordeals in jails when it was not all smooth sailing for me. I cannot recall a moment in my life when I had a sense of desertion by God.⁵²

Self-realization

I believe it to be possible for every human being to attain to that blessed and indescribable, sinless state in which he feels within himself the presence of God to the exclusion of everything else.⁵³

What I want to achieve, —what I have been striving and pining to achieve. . .,— is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain *moksha*. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing and all my ventures in the political field are directed to this same end.⁵⁴

For it is an unbroken torture to me that I am still so far from Him, who, as I fully know, governs every breath of my life, and whose offspring I am. I know that it is the evil passions within that keep me so far from Him, and yet I cannot get away from them.⁵⁵

This belief in God has to be based on faith which transcends reason. Indeed, even the so-called realization has at bottom an element of faith without which it cannot be sustained. In the very nature of things it must be so. Who can transgress the limitations of his being?

I hold that complete realization is impossible in this embodied life. Nor is it necessary. A living immovable faith is all that is required for reaching the full spiritual height attainable by human beings. God is not outside this earthly case of ours. Therefore, exterior proof is not of much avail, if any at all.

We must ever fail to perceive Him through the senses, because He is beyond them. We can feel Him if we will but withdraw ourselves from the senses. The divine music is incessantly going on within ourselves, but the loud senses drown the delicate music, which is unlike and infinitely superior to anything we can perceive or hear with our senses.⁵⁶

11. TRUTH AND BEAUTY

Inwardness of Art

THERE ARE two aspects of things—the outward and the inward. . . . The outward has no meaning except in so far as it helps the inward. All true Art is thus an expression of the soul. The outward forms have value only in so far as they are the expression of the inner spirit of man.⁵⁷

I know that many call themselves artists, and are recognized as such, and yet in their works there is absolutely no trace of the soul's upward urge and unrest.⁵⁸

All true Art must help the soul to realize its inner self. In my own case, I find that I can do entirely without external forms in my soul's realization. I can claim, therefore, that there is truly efficient Art in my life, though you might not see what you call works of Art about me.

My room may have blank walls; and I may even dispense with the roof, so that I may gaze out at the starry heavens overhead that stretch in an unending expanse. What conscious Art of man can give me the panoramic scenes that open out before me, when I look up to the sky above with all its shining stars?

This, however, does not mean that I refuse to accept the value of productions of Art, generally accepted as such, but only that I personally feel how inadequate these are compared with the eternal symbols of beauty in Nature. These productions of man's Art have their value only in so far as they help the soul onward towards self-realization.⁵⁹

Truth First

Truth is the first thing to be sought for, and Beauty and Goodness will then be added unto you. Jesus was, to my mind, a supreme artist because he saw and

expressed Truth; and so was Muhammad, the Koran being the most perfect composition in all Arabic literature—at any rate, that is what scholars say. It is because both of them strove first for Truth that the grace of expression naturally came in and yet neither Jesus nor Muhammad wrote on Art. That is the Truth and Beauty I crave for, live for, and would die for.⁶⁰

Art for the Millions

Here too, just as elsewhere, I must think in terms of the millions. And to the millions we cannot give that training to acquire a perception of Beauty in such a way as to see Truth in it. Show them Truth first and they will see Beauty afterwards. . . . Whatever can be useful to those starving millions is beautiful to my mind. Let us give today first the vital things of life, and all the graces and ornaments of life will follow.⁶¹

I want art and literature that can speak to the millions.⁶²

Art to be art must soothe.⁶³

After all, Art can only be expressed not through inanimate power-driven machinery designed for mass-production, but only through the delicate living touch of the hands of men and women.⁶⁴

Inner Purity

True art takes note not merely of form but also of what lies behind. There is an art that kills and an art that gives life. . . . True art must be evidence of happiness, contentment and purity of its authors.⁶⁵

True beauty after all consists in purity of heart.⁶⁶

I love music and all the other arts, but I do not attach such value to them as is generally done. I cannot, for example, recognize the value of those activities which require technical knowledge for their understanding.

Life is greater than all art. I would go even further and declare that the man whose life comes nearest to per-

fection is the greatest artist; for what is art without the sure foundation and framework of a noble life?⁶⁷

We have somehow accustomed ourselves to the belief that art is independent of the purity of private life. I can say with all the experience at my command that nothing could be more untrue. As I am nearing the end of my earthly life, I can say that purity of life, is the highest and truest art. The art of producing good music from a cultivated voice can be achieved by many, but the art of producing that music from the harmony of a pure life is achieved very rarely.⁶⁸

Beauty in Truth

I see and find beauty in Truth or through Truth. All Truths, not merely true ideas, but truthful faces, truthful pictures, or songs, are highly beautiful. People generally fail to see Beauty in Truth, the ordinary man runs away from it and becomes blind to the beauty in it. Whenever men begin to see Beauty in Truth, then true Art will arise.⁶⁹

To a true artist only that face is beautiful which, quite apart from its exterior, shines with the Truth within the soul. There is . . . no Beauty apart from Truth. On the other hand, Truth may manifest itself in forms which may not be outwardly beautiful at all. Socrates, we are told, was the most truthful man of his time, and yet his features are said to have been the ugliest in Greece. To my mind he was beautiful, because all his life was a striving after Truth, and you may remember that his outward form did not prevent Phidias from appreciating the beauty of Truth in him, though as an artist he was accustomed to see Beauty in outward forms also.⁷⁰

Truth and Untruth often co-exist; good and evil are often found together. In an artist also not seldom [do] the right perception of things and the wrong co-exist. Truly beautiful creations come when right perception is at work. If these monuments are rare in life, they are also rare in Art.⁷¹

These beauties ['a sunset or a crescent moon that shines amid the stars at night'] are truthful, inasmuch as they

make me think of the Creator at the back of them. How else could these be beautiful, but for the Truth that is in the centre of creation? When I admire the wonder of a sunset or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in worship of the Creator. I try to see Him and His mercies in all these creations. But even the sunsets and sunrises would be mere hindrances if they did not help me to think of Him. Anything which is a hindrance to the flight of the soul is a delusion and a snare; even like the body, which often does hinder you in the path of salvation.⁷²

Why can't you see the beauty of colour in vegetables? And then, there is beauty in the speckless sky. But no, you want the colours of the rainbow which is a mere optical illusion. We have been taught to believe that what is beautiful need not be useful and what is useful cannot be beautiful. I want to show that what is useful can also be beautiful.⁷³

III: FEARLESSNESS

12. THE GOSPEL OF FEARLESSNESS

FEARLESSNESS is the first requisite of spirituality. Cowards can never be moral.¹

Where there is fear there is no religion.²

Every reader of the *Gita* is aware that fearlessness heads the list of the Divine Attributes enumerated in the 16th Chapter. Whether this is merely due to the exigencies of metre, or whether the pride of place has been deliberately yielded to fearlessness is more than I can say. In my opinion, however, fearlessness richly deserves the first rank assigned to it there, perhaps, by accident.

Fearlessness is a *sine qua non* for the growth of the other noble qualities. How can one seek truth or cherish Love without fearlessness? As Pritam has it, 'The Path of Hari (the Lord) is the path of the brave, not of cowards.' Hari here means Truth, and the brave are those armed with fearlessness, not with the sword, the rifle or other carnal weapons which are affected only by cowards.³

Fearlessness connotes freedom from all external fear—fear of disease, bodily injury or death, of dispossession, of losing one's nearest and dearest, of losing reputation or giving offence, and so on.⁴

Attainment of Fearlessness

Perfect fearlessness can be attained only by him who has realized the Supreme, as it implies the height of freedom from delusions. But one can always progress towards this goal by determined and constant endeavour and by increasing confidence in oneself. . . .

As for the internal foes, we must ever walk in their fear. We are rightly afraid of Animal Passion, Anger and

the like. External fears cease of their own accord when once we have conquered these traitors within the camp. All fears revolve round the body as the centre, and would, therefore, disappear as soon as one got rid of the attachment for the body.

We thus find that all fear is the baseless fabric of our own vision. Fear has no place in our hearts when we have shaken off the attachment for wealth, for family and for the body. '*Tena tyaktena bhunjithah*'* is a noble commandment. The wealth, the family and the body will be there, just the same; we have only to change our attitude to them. All these are not ours but God's. Nothing whatever in this world is ours. Even we ourselves are His. Why then should we entertain any fears?

The Upanishad, therefore, directs us 'to give up attachment for things while we enjoy them'. That is to say, we must be interested in them not as proprietors but only as trustees. He on whose behalf we hold them will give us the strength and the weapons requisite for defending them against all comers.

When we thus cease to be masters and reduce ourselves to the rank of servants humbler than the very dust under our feet, all fears will roll away like mists; we shall attain ineffable peace and see Satyanarayan (the God of Truth) face to face.⁵

Fear of God

Let us fear God and we shall cease to fear man.⁶

There is so much superstition and hypocrisy around that one is afraid even to do the right thing. But if one gives way to fear, even truth will have to be suppressed. The golden rule is to act fearlessly upon what one believes to be right.⁷

Fearlessness does not mean arrogance or aggressiveness. That in itself is a sign of fear. Fearlessness presupposes

* 'Enjoy the things of the earth by renouncing them.'

calmness and peace of mind. For that it is necessary to have a living faith in God.⁸

Fear is a thing which I dislike. Why should one man be afraid of another man? Man should stand in fear of God alone, and then he can shed all other fears.⁹

Bravery of the Soul

Each individual must be taught the art of self-defence. It is more a mental state that has to be inculcated than that our bodies should be trained for retaliation. Our mental training has been one of feeling helpless. Bravery is not a quality of the body, it is of the soul. I have seen cowards encased in tough muscle, and rare courage in the frailest body. . . . The weakest of us physically must be taught the art of facing dangers and giving a good account of ourselves.¹⁰

We stand on the threshold of a twilight—whether morning or evening twilight we know not. One is followed by the night, the other heralds the dawn. If we want to see the dawning day after the twilight and not the mournful night, it behoves everyone of us . . . to realize the truth at this juncture, to stand for it against any odds and to preach and practise it, at any cost, unflinchingly.¹¹

We have chosen for our march towards freedom the ancient path of truth and non-violence, and we must let God's covenant, that those who tread on the strait and narrow path shall never come to grief, inspire us with faith and hope.¹²

In this country of self-suppression and timidity, almost bordering on cowardice, we cannot have too much bravery, too much self-sacrifice. . . . I want . . . the greater bravery of the meek, the gentle, and the non-violent, the bravery that will mount the gallows without injuring, or harbouring any thought of injury to a single soul.¹³

There is no bravery greater than a resolute refusal to bend the knee to an earthly power, no matter how great, and that, without bitterness of spirit and in the fullness of faith that the spirit alone lives, nothing else does.¹⁴

We have two choices before us. We can become a great military power or, if we follow my way, we can become a great non-violent and invincible power. In either case the first condition is the shedding of all fear.¹⁵

IV: FAITH

13. THE GOSPEL OF FAITH

It is faith that steers us through stormy seas, faith that moves mountains and faith that jumps across the ocean. That faith is nothing but a living, wide-awake consciousness of God within. He who has achieved that faith wants nothing. Bodily diseased, he is spiritually healthy; physically poor, he rolls in spiritual riches.¹

Without faith this world would come to naught in a moment. True faith is appropriation of the reasoned experience of people whom we believe to have lived a life purified by prayer and penance. Belief, therefore, in prophets or incarnations who have lived in remote ages is not an idle superstition but a satisfaction of an inmost spiritual want.²

Faith is not a delicate flower which would wither under the slightest stormy weather. Faith is like the Himalaya mountains which cannot possibly change. No storm can possibly remove the Himalaya mountains from their foundations. . . . And I want every one of you to cultivate that faith in God and religion.³

Limitations of Reason

Experience has humbled me enough to let me realize the specific limitations of reason. Just as matter misplaced becomes dirt, reason misused becomes lunacy.

Rationalists are admirable beings, rationalism is a hideous monster when it claims for itself omnipotence. Attribution of omnipotence to reason is as bad a piece of idolatry as is worship of stock and stone believing it to be God.⁴

I plead not for the suppression of reason, but for a due recognition of that in us which sanctifies reason itself.⁵

To me it is as plain as a pike-staff that, where there is an appeal to reason pure and undefiled, there should be no appeal to authority however great it may be.⁶

There are subjects where Reason cannot take us far and we have to accept things on faith. Faith then does not contradict Reason but transcends it. Faith is a kind of sixth sense which works in cases which are without the purview of Reason.⁷

Meaning of Religion

Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not the Hindu religion which I certainly prize above all other religions, but the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself.⁸

By religion, I do not mean formal religion, or customary religion, but that religion which underlies all religions, which brings us face to face with our Maker.⁹

My Religion

My religion has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself.¹⁰

Mine is not a religion of the prison-house. It has room for the least among God's creation. But it is proof against insolence, pride of race, religion or colour.¹¹

There is undoubtedly a sense in which the statement is true when I say that I hold my religion dearer than my country and that, therefore, I am a Hindu first and nationalist after. I do not become on that score a less nationalist than the best of them. I simply thereby imply that the interests of my country are identical with those of my religion.

Similarly when I say that I prize my own salvation above everything else, above the salvation of India, it does

not mean that my personal salvation requires a sacrifice of India's political or any other salvation. But it implies necessarily that the two go together.¹²

This is the maxim of life which I have accepted, namely, that no work done by any man, no matter how great he is, will really prosper unless he has religious backing.¹³

I have abundant faith in my cause and humanity. Indian humanity is no worse than any other; possibly it is better. Indeed, the cause presumes faith in human nature. Dark though the path appears, God will light it and guide my steps, if I have faith in His guidance and humility enough to acknowledge my helplessness without that infallible guidance.¹⁴

This may be considered to be quixotic, but it is my firm faith that he who undertakes to do something in the name of God, and in full faith in Him, even at the end of his days, does not work in vain; and I am sure that the work I have undertaken is not mine, but is God's.¹⁵

That is *dharma* which is enjoined by the holy books, followed by the sages, interpreted by the learned and which appealed to the heart. The first three conditions must be fulfilled before the fourth comes into operation. Thus one has no right to follow the precepts of an ignorant man or a rascal even though they commend themselves to one. Rigorous observance of harmlessness, non-enmity and renunciation are the first requisites for a person to entitle him to lay down the law, i.e., *dharma*.¹⁶

Futility of Force

I have a deep conviction that no religion can be sustained by brute force. On the contrary, those who take the sword always perish by the sword.¹⁷

Religions, like nations, are being weighed in the balance. That religion and that nation will be blotted out of the face of earth which pins its faith to injustice, untruth or violence.¹⁸

Morality

With me moral includes spiritual. . . . In my career as a

reformer, I have regarded everything from the moral standpoint. Whether I am engaged in tackling a political question or a social or an economic one, the moral side of it always obtrudes itself and it pervades my whole attitude.¹⁹

There is no such thing as absolute morality for all times. But there is a relative morality which is absolute enough for imperfect mortals that we are. Thus, it is absolutely immoral to drink spirituous liquors except as medicine, in medicinal doses and under medical advice. Similarly, it is absolutely wrong to see lustfully any woman other than one's wife. Both these positions have been proved by cold reason. Counter-arguments have always been advanced. They have been advanced against the very existence of God—the Sum of all that Is. Faith that transcends reason is our only Rock of Ages. . . . My faith has saved me and is still saving me from pitfalls. It has never betrayed me. It has never been known to betray anyone.²⁰

Diversity of Religion

In reality there are as many religions as there are individuals.²¹

Religions are different roads converging upon the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal?²²

I do not share the belief that there can or will be on earth one religion. I am striving, therefore, to find a common factor and to induce mutual tolerance.²³

Basic Unity

The soul of religions is one, but it is encased in a multitude of forms. The latter will persist to the end of time. Wise men will ignore the outward crust and see the same soul living under a variety of crusts.²⁴

I believe that all the great religions of the world are true more or less. I say 'more or less' because I believe that everything that the human hand touches, by reason of the very fact that human beings are imperfect, becomes imperfect. Perfection is the exclusive attribute of God and it is indescribable, untranslatable. I do believe that it is

possible for every human being to become perfect even as God is perfect. It is necessary for us all to aspire after perfection, but when that blessed state is attained, it becomes indescribable, indefinable. And I therefore admit, in all humility, that even the Vedas, the Koran and the Bible are imperfect word of God and, imperfect beings that we are, swayed to and fro by a multitude of passions, it is impossible for us even to understand this word of God in its fulness.²⁵

I should love all the men—not only in India but in the world—belonging to the different faiths, to become better people by contact with one another, and if that happens, the world will be a much better place to live in than it is today. I plead for the broadest toleration, and I am working to that end. I ask people to examine every religion from the point of the religionists themselves. I do not expect the India of my dream to develop one religion, i.e., to be wholly Hindu, or wholly Christian, or wholly Mussalman, but I want it to be wholly tolerant, with its religions working side by side with one another.²⁶

I came to the conclusion long ago, after prayerful search and study and discussion with as many people as I could meet, that all religions were true and also that all had some error in them, and that, whilst I hold by my own, I should hold others as dear as Hinduism, from which it logically follows that we should hold all as dear as our nearest kith and kin and that we should make no distinction between them.²⁷

Belief in one God is the corner-stone of all religions. But I do not foresee a time when there would be only one religion on earth in practice. In theory, since there is one God, there can be only one religion. But in practice, no two persons I have known have had the same identical conception of God. Therefore, there will, perhaps, always be different religions answering to different temperaments and climatic conditions.²⁸

I believe in the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world. I believe that they are all God-given, and I believe that they were necessary for the people to

whom these religions were revealed. And I believe that, if only we could all of us read the scriptures of the different faiths from the standpoint of the followers of those faiths, we should find that they were at the bottom all one and were all helpful to one another.²⁹

Religions are not for separating men from one another, they are meant to bind them.³⁰

The Scriptures

For me the Vedas are divine and unwritten. 'The letter killeth.' It is the spirit that giveth the light. And the spirit of the Vedas is purity, truth, innocence, chastity, humility, simplicity, forgiveness, godliness, and all that makes a man or woman noble and brave.³¹

I do not believe in the exclusive divinity of the Vedas. I believe the Bible, the Koran and the Zend Avesta, to be as much divinely inspired as the Vedas. My belief in the Hindu scriptures does not require me to accept every word and every verse as divinely inspired. . . . I decline to be bound by an interpretation, however learned it may be, if it is repugnant to reason or moral sense.³²

I am not a literalist. Therefore, I try to understand the spirit of the various scriptures of the world. I apply the test of Truth and *ahimsa* laid down by these very scriptures for interpretation. I reject what is inconsistent with that test, and appropriate all that is consistent with it.³³

I have not been able to see any difference between the Sermon on the Mount and the Bhagavad Gita. What the Sermon describes in a graphic manner, the Bhagavad Gita reduces to a scientific formula. It may not be a scientific book in the accepted sense of the term, but it has argued out the law of love—the law of abandon as I would call it—in a scientific manner. The Sermon on the Mount gives the same law in wonderful language. The New Testament gave me comfort and boundless joy, as it came after the repulsion that parts of the Old had given me. Today, supposing I was deprived of the Gita and forgot all its contents but had a copy of the Sermon, I should derive the same joy from it as I do from the Gita.³⁴

There is one thing in me, and that is that I love to see the bright side of things and not the seamy side, and so I can derive comfort and inspiration from any great book of any great religion. I may not be able to reproduce a single verse from the Gita or the New Testament; a Hindu child or Christian child may be able to repeat the verses better; but those clever children cannot deprive me of the assimilation that is in me today of the spirit of the two books.³⁵

One's experience, therefore, must be the final guide. The written word undoubtedly helps, but even that has to be interpreted, and when there are conflicting interpretations, the seeker is the final arbiter.³⁶

I believe I have no superstition in me. Truth is not truth merely because it is ancient. Nor is it necessarily to be regarded with suspicion because it is ancient. There are some fundamentals of life which may not be lightly given up because they are difficult of enforcement in one's life.³⁷

Religious Instruction

If India is not to declare spiritual bankruptcy, religious instruction of its youth must be held to be at least as necessary as secular instruction. It is true that knowledge of religious books is no equivalent of that of religion. But if we cannot have religion, we must be satisfied with providing our boys and girls with what is next best. And whether there is such instruction given in the schools or not, grown-up students must cultivate the art of self-help about matters religious as about others. They may start their own class just as they have their debating, and now, spinners' clubs.³⁸

I do not believe that the State can concern itself or cope with religious education. I believe that religious education must be the sole concern of religious associations. Do not mix up religion and ethics. I believe that fundamental ethics is common to all religions. Teaching of fundamental ethics is undoubtedly a function of the State. By religion I have not in mind fundamental ethics but what

goes by the name of denominationalism. We have suffered enough from State-aided religion and a State Church. A society or a group, which depends partly or wholly on State aid for the existence of its religion, does not deserve, or, better still, does not have any religion worth the name.³⁹

A curriculum of religious instruction should include a study of the tenets of faiths other than one's own. For this purpose the students should be trained to cultivate the habit of understanding and appreciating the doctrines of various great religions of the world in a spirit of reverence and broad-minded tolerance.⁴⁰

14. THE MEANING OF GOD

Law-giver and Law

GOD MAY be called by any other name so long as it connotes the living Law of Life—in other words, the Law and the Law-giver rolled into one.⁴¹

God Himself is both the Law and the Law-giver. The question of anyone creating Him, therefore, does not arise, least of all by an insignificant creature such as man. Man can build a dam, but he cannot create a river. He can manufacture a chair, but it is beyond him to make the wood. He can, however, picture God in his mind in many ways. But how can man who is unable to create even a river or wood create God? That God has created man is, therefore, the pure truth. The contrary is an illusion. However, anyone may, if he likes, say that God is neither the doer nor the cause. Either is predicable of Him.⁴²

No Personal God

I do not regard God as a person. Truth for me is God, and God's Law and God are not different things or facts, in the sense that an earthly king and his law are different. Because God is an Idea, Law Himself. Therefore, it is impossible to conceive God as breaking the Law. He, therefore, does not rule our actions and withdraw Himself. When

we say He rules our actions, we are simply using human language and we try to limit Him. Otherwise He and His Law abide everywhere and govern everything.

Therefore, I do not think that He answers in every detail every request of ours, but there is no doubt that He rules our action. . . . The free will we enjoy is less than that of a passenger on a crowded deck.

. . . Although I know that my freedom is less than that of a passenger, I appreciate that freedom, as I have imbibed through and through the central teaching of the Gita that man is the maker of his own destiny in the sense that he has freedom of choice as to the manner in which he uses that freedom. But he is no controller of results. The moment he thinks he is, he comes to grief.⁴³

Let this however be quite clear. The Almighty is not a person like us. He or It is the greatest living Force or Law in the world. Accordingly, He does not act by caprice, nor does that Law admit of any amendment or improvement. His will is fixed and changeless, everything else changes every second.⁴⁴

His Personality

I have not seen God face to face. If I had, I would have no need to be speaking to you. My thought would be potent enough to render speech and action on my part unnecessary. But I have an undying faith in the existence of God. Millions all over the world share this faith with me. The most learned cannot shake the faith of the illiterate millions.⁴⁵

God is wholly good. There is no evil in Him. God made man in His own image. Unfortunately for us, man has fashioned Him in his own. This arrogation has landed mankind in a sea of troubles. God is the Supreme Alchemist. In His presence all iron and dross turn into pure gold. Similarly does all evil turn into good.

Again, God lives, but not as we. His creatures live but to die. But God is life. Therefore, goodness and all it connotes is not an attribute.

Goodness is God. Goodness conceived as apart from Him is a lifeless thing and exists only whilst it is a paying policy. So are all morals. If they are to live in us, they must be considered and cultivated in their relation to God. We try to become good because we want to reach and realize God. All the dry ethics of the world turn to dust because apart from God they are lifeless. Coming from God, they come with life in them. They become part of us and ennoble us.

Conversely, God conceived without goodness is without life. We give Him life in our vain imaginings.⁴⁶

There is a big gulf between 'seeing God face to face' and 'seeing Him in the embodiment of Truth from a far distance'. In my opinion, the two statements are not only not incompatible but each explains the other. We see the Himalayas from a very great distance and when we are on the top, we have seen the Himalayas face to face. Millions can see them from hundreds of miles if they are within the range of that seeing distance, but few having arrived at the top, after years of travel, see them face to face.⁴⁷

I have never had [the slightest doubt] about the reality that God Is and that His most graphic name is Truth.⁴⁸

Power of God

Everything that has a beginning must end. The sun, the moon and the earth must all perish one day, even though it might be after an incalculable number of years. God alone is immortal, imperishable. How can anyone find words to describe Him?⁴⁹

God cannot be realized through the intellect. Intellect can lead one to a certain extent and no further. It is a matter of faith and experience derived from faith. One might rely on the experience of one's betters or else be satisfied with nothing less than personal experience. Full faith does not feel the want of experience.⁵⁰

God alone knows Absolute Truth. Therefore, I have often said, Truth is God. It follows that man, a finite being, cannot know Absolute Truth.⁵¹

I call that great Power not by the name of *Allah*, not by the name of *Khuda* or God, but by the name of Truth. For me Truth is God and Truth overrides all our plans. The whole truth is only embodied within the heart of that Great Power—Truth. I was taught from my early days to regard Truth as un-approachable—something that you cannot reach. A great Englishman taught me to believe that God is unknowable. He is knowable, but knowable only to the extent that our limited intellect allows.⁵²

God is all-powerful. He can change the hearts of man and bring real peace among them.⁵³

His Rule

Today, in the West, people talk of Christ, but it is really the Anti-Christ that rules their lives. Similarly, there are people who talk of Islam, but really follow the way of Satan. It is a deplorable state of affairs. . . . If people follow the way of God, there will not be all this corruption and profiteering that we see in the world. The rich are becoming richer and the poor poorer. Hunger, nakedness and death stare one in the face. These are not the marks of the Kingdom of God, but that of Satan, Ravana or Anti-Christ. We cannot expect to bring the reign of God on earth by merely repeating His name with the lips. Our conduct must conform to His ways instead of Satan's.⁵⁴

Only when God reigns in men's hearts will they be able to shed their anger.⁵⁵

All universal rules of conduct known as God's commandments are simple and easy to understand and carry out if the will is there. They only appear to be difficult because of the inertia which governs mankind. Man is a progressive being. There is nothing at a standstill in nature. Only God is motionless for, He was, is and will be the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, and yet is ever moving. We need not, however, worry ourselves over the attributes of God. We have to realize that we are ever progressing. Hence, I hold that if mankind is to live, it has to come growingly under the sway of truth and

non-violence. It is in view of these two fundamental rules of conduct that I and you have to work and live.⁵⁶

A mind not set on God is given to wandering and lacks the quality of a temple of worship.⁵⁷

Genesis of Evil

Why is there evil in the world is a difficult question to answer. I can only give what I may call a villager's answer. If there is good, there must also be evil, just as where there is light there is also darkness, but it is true only so far as we human mortals are concerned. Before God there is nothing good, nothing evil. We poor villagers may talk of His dispensation in human terms, but our language is not God's.

The Vedanta says the world is *maya*. Even that explanation is a babbling of imperfect humanity. I, therefore, say that I am not going to bother my head about it. Even if I was allowed to peep into the innermost recesses of God's chamber I should not care to do it. For I should not know what to do there. It is enough for our spiritual growth to know that God is always with the doer of good. That again is a villager's explanation.⁵⁸

I cannot account for the existence of evil by any rational method. To want to do so is to be coequal with God. I am therefore humble enough to recognize evil as such. And I call God long suffering and patient precisely because He permits evil in the world. I know that He has no evil. He is the author of it and yet untouched by it.

I know too that I shall never know God if I do not wrestle with and against evil even at the cost of life itself. I am fortified in the belief by my own humble and limited experience. The purer I try to become, the nearer I feel to be to God. How much more should I be, when my faith is not a mere apology as it is today but has become as immovable as the Himalayas and as white and bright as the snows on their peaks?⁵⁹

In a strictly scientific sense God is at the bottom of both good and evil. He directs the assassin's dagger no less

than the surgeon's knife. But for all that good and evil are, for human purposes, from each other distinct and incompatible, being symbolical of light and darkness, God and Satan. . . .⁶⁰

To say that God permits evil in this world may not be pleasing to the ear. But if He is held responsible for the good, it follows that He has to be responsible for the evil too. Did not God permit Ravana to exhibit unparalleled strength? Perhaps, the root cause of the perplexity arises from a lack of the real understanding of what God is. God is not a person. He transcends description. He is the Law-maker, the Law and the Executor. No human being can well arrogate these powers to himself. If he did, he would be looked upon as an unadulterated dictator. They become only Him whom we worship as God. This is the reality, a clear understanding of which will answer the question ['Does God permit evil?']⁶¹

There is a saying to the effect that the outer is only the reflection of the inner. If you are good, the whole world will be good to you. On the contrary, if you feel tempted to regard anybody as evil, the odds are that the evil is within you. . . .

We must neither think evil about others nor suspect others of thinking evil about us. Proneness to lend ear to evil reports is a sign of lack of faith.⁶²

Miracles

I do [believe in miracles] and I do not. God does not work through miracles. But the divine mind is revealed in a flash and it appears like a miracle to man. We do not know God, we know Him only through the working of His law. He and His law are one. There is nothing outside His law. Even earthquakes and tempests do not occur without His will—not a blade of grass grows but He wills it. Satan is here only on His sufferance, not independently of Him.⁶³

Man cannot be transformed from bad to good overnight. God does not exercise magic. He too is within

His own law. His law, however, is different from the law of the State. There may be mistakes in the latter, but God cannot err. If he were to go beyond the limits of His law, the world will be lost.⁶⁴

History provides us with a whole series of miracles of masses of people being converted to a particular view-point in the twinkling of an eye. Take the Boer War. It has given to the English language the word 'Maffeking'. People went mad on the Maffeking Day. Yet, inside of two years, the whole British nation underwent a transformation. Henry Campbell Bannerman became the Premier and practically all the gains of war were given up. The recent Labour victory at the polls is another instance in point. To me it is a sufficient miracle that, in spite of his oratory and brilliance, Churchill should cease to be the idol of the British people who till yesterday hung on his lips and listened to him in awe. All these instances are enough to sustain the faith of a believer like me that, when all other powers are gone one will remain, call it God, Nature or whatever you like.⁶⁵

Incarnation

All embodied life is in reality an incarnation of God, but it is not usual to consider every living being an incarnation. Future generations pay this homage to one who, in his own generation, has been extraordinarily religious in his conduct. I can see nothing wrong in this procedure; it takes nothing from God's greatness, and there is no violence done to Truth. . . .

This belief in incarnation is a testimony of man's lofty spiritual ambition. Man is not at peace with himself till he has become like unto God. The endeavour to reach this state is the supreme, the only ambition worth having. And this is self-realization. And this self-realization is the subject of the Gita, as it is of all scriptures.⁶⁶

Belief, therefore, in prophets or incarnations who have lived in remote ages is not an idle superstition, but a satisfaction of an inmost spiritual want.⁶⁷

God's Laws

Human language can but imperfectly describe God's ways. I am sensible of the fact that they are indescribable and inscrutable. But if mortal man will dare to describe them, he has no better medium than his own inarticulate speech.⁶⁸

We do not know all the laws of God nor their working. Knowledge of the tallest scientist or the greatest spiritualist is like a particle of dust. If God is not a personal being for me like my earthly father, He is infinitely more. He rules me in the tiniest detail of my life. I believe literally that not a leaf moves but by His will. Every breath I take depends upon His sufferance.

He and His Law are one. The Law is God. Anything attributed to Him is not a mere attribute. He is the attribute. He is Truth, Love, Law and a million other things that human ingenuity can name.⁶⁹

The laws of Nature are changeless, unchangeable, and there are no miracles in the sense of infringement or interruption of Nature's laws. But we, limited beings, fancy all kinds of things and impute our limitations to God. We may copy God, but not He us. We may not divide Time for Him. Time for Him is eternity. For us there is past, present and future. And what is human life of a hundred years but less than a mere speck in the eternity of Time?⁷⁰

Nature's Visitations

I share the belief with the whole world—civilized and uncivilized—that calamities such as the Bihar one [earthquake] come to mankind as chastisement for their sins. When that conviction comes from the heart, people pray, repent and purify themselves. . . .

I have but a limited knowledge of His purpose. Such calamities are not a mere caprice of the Deity or Nature. They obey fixed laws as surely as the planets move in obedience to laws governing their movements. Only we do not know the laws governing these events and, therefore, call them calamities or disturbances.⁷¹

This earthly existence of ours is more brittle than the glass bangles that ladies wear. You can keep glass bangles for thousands of years if you treasure them in a chest and let them remain untouched. But this earthly existence is so fickle that it may be wiped out in the twinkling of an eye. Therefore, while we have yet breathing time, let us get rid of the distinctions of high and low, purify our hearts and be ready to face our Maker when an earthquake or some natural calamity or death in the ordinary course overtakes us.⁷²

There is a divine purpose behind every physical calamity. That perfected science will one day be able to tell us beforehand when earthquakes will occur, as it tells us today of eclipses, is quite possible. It will be another triumph of the human mind. But such triumph even indefinitely multiplied can bring about no purification of self without which nothing is of any value.

I ask those who appreciate the necessity of inward purification to join in the prayer that we may read the purpose of God behind such visitations, that they may humble us and prepare us to face our Maker whenever the call comes, and that we may be ever ready to share the sufferings of our fellows whosoever they may be.⁷³

God's Names

God has a thousand names, or rather, He is Nameless. We may worship or pray to Him by whichever name that pleases us. Some call Him Rama, some Krishna, others call Him Rahim, and yet others call Him God. All worship the same spirit, but as all foods do not agree with all, all names do not appeal to all. Each chooses the name according to his associations, and He, being the In-Dweller, All-Powerful and Omniscient, knows our innermost feelings and responds to us according to our deserts.

Worship or prayer, therefore, is not to be performed with the lips, but with the heart. And that is why it can be performed equally by the dumb and the stammerer, by the ignorant and the stupid. And the prayers of

those whose tongues are nectared but whose hearts are full of poison are never heard. He, therefore, who would pray to God, must cleanse his heart.

Rama was not only on the lips of Hanuman, He was enthroned in his heart. He gave Hanuman exhaustless strength. In His strength he lifted the mountain and crossed the ocean.⁷⁴

I talk of God exactly as I believe Him to be. . . . I believe God to be creative as well as non-creative. This too is the result of my acceptance of the doctrine of the manyness of reality. From the platform of the Jains I prove the non-creative aspect of God, and from that of Ramanuja the creative aspect. As a matter of fact, we are all thinking of the Unthinkable, describing the Indescribable, seeking to know the Unknown, and that is why our speech falters, is inadequate and even often contradictory. That is why the Vedas describe Brahman as 'not this', 'not this'.⁷⁵

In my opinion, Rama, Rahaman, Ahuramazda, God or Krishna are all attempts on the part of man to name that invisible force which is the greatest of all forces. It is inherent in man, imperfect though he be, ceaselessly to strive after perfection. In the attempt he falls into reverie. And, just as a child tries to stand, falls down again and again and ultimately learns how to walk, even so man, with all his intelligence, is a mere infant as compared to the infinite and ageless God. This may appear to be an exaggeration but is not. Man can only describe God in his own poor language.⁷⁶

15. RAMANAMA

My Saviour

THOUGH MY reason and heart long ago realized the highest attribute and name of God as Truth, I recognize Truth by the name of Rama. In the darkest hour of my trial, that one name has saved me and is still saving me. It may be the association of childhood, it may be the fascination that Tulasidas has wrought on me.

But the potent fact is there, and as I write these lines, my memory revives the scenes of my childhood, when I used daily to visit the Ramji Mandir adjacent to my ancestral home. My Rama then resided there. He saved me from many fears and sins. It was no superstition for me. The custodian of the idol may have been a bad man. I know nothing against him. Misdeeds might have gone on in the temple. Again I know nothing of them. Therefore, they would not affect me. What was and is true of me is true of millions of Hindus.⁷⁷

When a child, my nurse taught me to repeat Ramanama whenever I felt afraid or miserable, and it has been second nature with me with growing knowledge and advancing years. I may even say that the Word is in my heart, if not actually on my lips, all the twenty-four hours. It has been my saviour and I am ever stayed on it. In the spiritual literature of the world, the *Ramayana* of Tulasidas takes a foremost place. It has charms that I miss in the *Mahabharata* and even in Valmiki's *Ramayana*.⁷⁸

Best Worship

I myself have been a devotee of Tulasidas from my childhood and have, therefore, always worshipped God as Rama. But I know that if, beginning with *Omkar*, one goes through the entire gamut of God's names current in all climes, all countries and languages, the result is the

same. He and His law are one. To observe His law is, therefore, the best form of worship.⁷⁹

One God

I laugh within myself when someone objects that Rama or the chanting of Ramanama is for the Hindus only, how can Mussalmans therefore take part in it? Is there one God for the Mussalmans and another for the Hindus, Parsis, or Christians? No, there is only one omnipotent and omnipresent God. He is named variously and we remember Him by the name which is most familiar to us.

My Rama, the Rama of our prayers is not the historical Rama, the son of Dasharatha, the King of Ayodhya. He is the eternal, the unborn, the one without a second. Him alone I worship. His aid alone I seek, and so should you. He belongs equally to all. I, therefore, see no reason why a Mussalman or anybody should object to taking His name. But he is in no way bound to recognize God as Ramanama. He may utter to himself Allah or Khuda so as not to mar the harmony of the sound.⁸⁰

To me . . . Rama, described as the Lord of Sita, son of Dasharatha, is the all-powerful essence whose name, inscribed in the heart, removes all suffering—mental, moral and physical.⁸¹

Curative Power

An apt question is as to why a man who recites Ramanama regularly and leads a pure life should ever fall ill. Man is by nature imperfect. A thoughtful man strives after perfection, but never attains it. He stumbles on the way, however unwittingly. The whole of God's law is embodied in a pure life.

The first thing is to realize one's limitations. It should be obvious that, the moment one transgresses those limits, one falls ill. Thus a balanced diet eaten in accordance with needs gives one freedom from disease. How is one to know what is the proper diet for one? Many such enigmas can be imagined. The purport of it all is that everyone should

be his own doctor and find out his limitations. The man who does so will surely live up to 125.⁸²

Ramanama cannot perform the miracle of restoring to you a lost limb. But it can perform the still greater miracle of helping you to enjoy an ineffable peace in spite of the loss while you live and rob death of its sting and the grave its victory at the journey's end. Since death must come soon or late to everyone, why should one worry over the time?⁸³

The practice of nature cure does not require high academic qualifications or much erudition. Simplicity is the essence of universality. Nothing that is meant for the benefit of the millions requires much erudition. The latter can be acquired only by the few and, therefore, can benefit the rich only.

But India lives in her seven lakhs of villages—obs-cure, tiny, out-of-the-way villages, where the population in some cases hardly exceeds a few hundred, very often not even a few score.

I would like to go and settle down in some such village. That is real India, my India. You cannot take to these humble people the paraphernalia of highly qualified doctors and hospital equipment. In simple, natural remedies and Ramanama lies their only hope.⁸⁴

Purity of Thought

Mere lip recitation of Ramanama has nothing to do with cure. Faith cure, if I know it correctly, is blind cure, such as the friend describes and thereby ridicules the living name of the living God. The latter is not a figment of one's imagination. It has to come from the heart.

It is conscious belief in God and a knowledge of His law that make perfect cure possible without any further aid. That law is that a perfect mind is responsible for perfect health of the body. A perfect mind comes from a perfect heart, not the heart known by a doctor's stethoscope but the heart which is the seat of God. It is claimed that

realization of God in the heart makes it impossible for an impure or an idle thought to cross the mind.

Disease is impossible where there is purity of thought. Such a state may be difficult to attain. But the first step in the ascent to health is taken with its recognition. The next is taken when the corresponding attempt is made. This radical alteration in one's life is naturally accompanied by the observance of all other nature's laws hitherto discovered by man. One cannot play with them and claim to have a pure heart.

It can be said with justice that possession of a pure heart should do equally well without Ramanama. Only, I know no other way of attaining purity. And it is the way trodden by the sages of old all over the world. They were men of God, not superstitious men or charlatans.⁸⁵

Spiritual force is like any other force at the service of man. Apart from the fact that it has been used for physical ailments for ages, with more or less success, it would be intrinsically wrong not to use it, if it can be successfully used for the cure of physical ailments. For, man is both matter and spirit, each acting on and affecting the other.

If you get rid of malaria by taking quinine, without thinking of the millions who do not get it, why should you refuse to use the remedy which is within you, because millions will not use it through their ignorance?

May you not be clean and well because millions of others will not be so, ignorantly or, may be, even cussedly? If you will not be clean out of false notions of philanthropy, you will deny yourself the duty of serving the very millions by remaining dirty and ill. Surely refusal to be spiritually well or clean is worse than the refusal to be physically clean and well.⁸⁶

To repeat Ramanama and to follow the way of Ravana in actual practice is worse than useless. It is sheer hypocrisy. One may deceive oneself or the world, but one cannot deceive the Almighty.⁸⁷

16. PRAYER THE FOOD OF MY SOUL

I CLAIM to be a man of faith and prayer, and even if I were cut to pieces, I trust God would give me the strength not to deny Him and to assert that He is.⁸⁸

No act of mine is done without prayer. Man is a fallible being. He can never be sure of his steps. What he may regard as answer to prayer may be an echo of his pride. For infallible guidance man has to have a perfectly innocent heart incapable of evil. I can lay no such claim. Mine is a struggling, striving, erring, imperfect soul.⁸⁹

Even if I am killed, I will not give up repeating the names of Rama and Rahim, which mean to me the same God. With these names on my lips, I will die cheerfully.⁹⁰

Safeguard in Trial

On all occasions of trial He has saved me. I know that the phrase 'God saved me' has a deeper meaning for me today, and still I feel that I have not yet grasped its entire meaning. Only richer experience can help me to a fuller understanding.

But in all my trials—of a spiritual nature, as a lawyer, in conducting institutions, and in politics—I can say that God saved me. When every hope is gone, 'when helpers fail and comforts flee', I experience that help arrives somehow, from I know not where.

Prayer has been the saving of my life. Without it I should have been a lunatic long ago. My autobiography will tell you that I have had my fair share of the bitterest public and private experiences. They threw me into temporary despair, but if I was able to get rid of it, it was because of prayer.

Now I may tell you that prayer has not been part of my life in the sense that truth has been. It came out of

sheer necessity, as I found myself in a plight when I could not possibly be happy without it. And the more my faith in God increased, the more irresistible became the yearning for prayer. Life seemed to be dull and vacant without it.

I had attended the Christian service in South Africa, but it had failed to grip me. I could not join them in prayer. They supplicated God, but I could not do so, I failed egregiously. I started with disbelief in God and prayer, and, until at a late stage in life, I did not feel anything like a void in life. But at that stage I felt that, as food was indispensable for the body, so was prayer indispensable for the soul. In fact, food for the body is not so necessary as prayer for the soul. For starvation is often necessary in order to keep the body in health, but there is no such thing as prayer-starvation. . . .

In spite of despair staring me in the face on the political horizon, I have never lost my peace. In fact, I have found people who envy my peace. That peace, I tell you, comes from prayer; I am not a man of learning, but I humbly claim to be a man of prayer. I am indifferent as to the form. Every one is a law unto himself in that respect. But there are some well-marked roads, and it is safe to walk along the beaten tracks, trod by the ancient teachers.

. . . I have given my personal testimony. Let every one try and find that, as a result of daily prayer, he adds something new to his life, something with which nothing can be compared.⁹¹

God's Response

Never own defeat in a sacred cause and make up your minds henceforth that you *will* be pure and that you *will* find a response from God. But God never answers the prayers of the arrogant, nor the prayers of those who bargain with Him. . . .

If you would ask Him to help you, you would go to Him in all your nakedness, approach Him without reservations, also without fear or doubts as to how He can help a fallen being like you. He who has helped millions who

have approached Him, is He going to desert you? He makes no exceptions whatsoever and you will find that every one of your prayers will be answered. The prayer of even the most impure will be answered. I am telling this out of my personal experience. I have gone through the purgatory. Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and everything will be added unto you.⁹²

I have never found Him lacking in response. I have found Him nearest at hand when the horizon seemed darkest—in my ordeals in jails when it was not at all smooth sailing for me. I cannot recall a moment in my life when I had a sense of desertion by God.⁹³

Character of Prayer

Supplication, worship, prayer are no superstition; they are acts more real than the acts of eating, drinking, sitting or walking. It is no exaggeration to say that they alone are real, all else is unreal.

Such worship or prayer is no flight of eloquence; it is no lip-homage. It springs from the heart. If, therefore, we achieve that purity of the heart when it is 'emptied of all but love', if we keep all the chords in proper tune, they 'trembling pass in music out of sight'.

Prayer needs no speech. It is in itself independent of any sensuous effort. I have not the slightest doubt that prayer is an unfailing means of cleansing the heart of passions. But it must be combined with the utmost humility.⁹⁴

It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart.⁹⁵

We go to the temple to worship not the stone or the metal image, but God who resides in it. The image becomes what man makes of it. It has no power independently of the sanctity with which it is invested by the worshipper. Therefore everyone, including children, should observe perfect silence at the time of prayer.⁹⁶

Prayer is an impossibility without a living faith in the presence of God within.⁹⁷

Prayer is the first and the last lesson in learning the noble and brave art of sacrificing self in the various walks of life, culminating in the defence of one's nation's liberty and honour. Undoubtedly, prayer requires a living faith in God.⁹⁸

Man often repeats the name of God parrot-wise and expects fruit from so doing. The true seeker must have that living faith which will not only dispel the untruth of parrot-wise repetition from within him, but also from the hearts of others.⁹⁹

Need for Prayer

As food is necessary for the body, prayer is necessary for the soul. A man may be able to do without food for a number of days—as MacSwiney did for over 70 days—but, believing in God, man cannot, should not live a moment without prayer.¹⁰⁰

There are many who, whether from mental laziness or from having fallen into a bad habit, believe that God is and will help us unasked. Why, then, is it necessary to recite His name? It is true that if God is, He is irrespective of our belief. But realization of God is infinitely more than mere belief. That can come only by constant practice. This is true of all science. How much more true of the science of all sciences?¹⁰¹

Prayer 'is the key of the morning and the bolt of the evening.'¹⁰²

I am giving you a bit of my experience and that of my companions when I say that he who has experienced the magic of prayer may do without food for days together, but not a single moment without prayer. For without prayer there is no inward peace.¹⁰³

I agree that, if a man could practise the presence of God all the twenty-four hours, there would be no need for a separate time for prayer. But most people find this impossible. The sordid everyday world is too much with them. For them the practice of complete withdrawal of the mind from all outward things, even though it might be only for

a few minutes every day, will be found to be of infinite use. Silent communion will help them to experience an undisturbed peace in the midst of turmoil, to curb anger and cultivate patience.¹⁰⁴

It should be the general rule that prayers must not be delayed for anybody on earth. God's time never stops. From the very beginning the wheel of His time has gone ceaselessly on. As a matter of fact, there is no beginning for Him or His time. . . . How can anyone afford to miss the time of offering prayers to Him whose watch never stops?¹⁰⁵

In the first *shloka* of Ishopanishad that is repeated everyday at the beginning of the prayer, one is asked to dedicate everything to God and then use it to the required extent. The principal condition laid down is that one must not covet what belongs to another. These two maxims contain the quintessence of the Hindu religion.

Essence of Prayer

In another *shloka* which is recited during the morning prayer it is said, 'I do not ask for temporal power, nor do I ask to go to heaven, nor even to attain *Nirvana*. What I ask for is that I may be able to relieve the pain of those who are in pain.' The pain might be physical, mental or spiritual. Spiritual pain due to slavery to one's passions is sometimes greater even than the physical.

But God does not come down in person to relieve suffering. He works through human agency. Therefore, prayer to God to enable one to relieve the suffering of others must mean a longing and a readiness on one's part to labour for it.

The prayer . . . is not exclusive. It is not restricted to one's own caste or community. It is all inclusive. It comprehends the whole of humanity. Its realization would thus mean the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.¹⁰⁶

True meditation consists in closing the eyes and ears of the mind to all else except the object of one's devotion. Hence the closing of eyes during prayers is an aid to such

concentration. Man's conception of God is naturally limited. Each one has, therefore, to think of Him as best appeals to him, provided that the conception is pure and uplifting.¹⁰⁷

He can truly pray who has the conviction that God is within him. He who has not need not pray. God will not be offended, but I can say from experience that he who does not pray is certainly a loser.

What matters, then, whether one man worships God as Person and another as Force? Both do right according to their lights. None knows and, perhaps, never will know what is the absolutely proper way to pray. The ideal must always remain the ideal. One need only remember that God is the Force among all the forces. All other forces are material. But God is the vital force or spirit which is all-pervading, all-embracing and, therefore, beyond human ken.¹⁰⁸

Efficacy of Silence

It has often occurred to me that a seeker after truth has to be silent. I know the wonderful efficacy of silence. I visited a Trappist monastery in South Africa. A beautiful place it was. Most of the inmates of that place were under a vow of silence. I inquired of the Father the motive of it and he said the motive is apparent: 'We are frail human beings. We do not know very often what we say. If we want to listen to the still small voice that is always speaking within us, it will not be heard if we continually speak.' I understood that precious lesson. I know the secret of silence.¹⁰⁹

Experience has taught me that silence is a part of the spiritual discipline of a votary of truth. Proneness to exaggerate, to suppress or modify the truth, wittingly or unwittingly, is a natural weakness of man, and silence is necessary in order to surmount it. A man of few words will rarely be thoughtless in his speech; he will measure every word.¹¹⁰

Silence of the sewn-up lips is no silence. One may achieve the same result by chopping off one's tongue, but that too would not be silence. He is silent who, having the capacity to speak, utters no idle word.¹¹¹

It [silence] has now become both a physical and spiritual necessity for me. Originally it was taken to relieve the sense of pressure. Then I wanted time for writing. After, however, I had practised it for some time, I saw the spiritual value of it. It suddenly flashed across my mind that that was the time when I could best hold communion with God. And now I feel as though I was naturally built for silence.¹¹²

Prayer is for remembering God, and for purifying the heart, and can be offered even when observing silence.¹¹³

As I believe that silent prayer is often a mightier [force] than any overt act, in my helplessness I continuously pray in the faith that the prayer of a pure heart never goes unanswered.¹¹⁴

Power of Prayer

I can give my own testimony and say that a heartfelt prayer is undoubtedly the most potent instrument that man possesses for overcoming cowardice and all other bad old habits.¹¹⁵

Not until we have reduced ourselves to nothingness can we conquer the evil in us. God demands nothing less than complete self-surrender as the price for the only real freedom that is worth having. And when a man thus loses himself, he immediately finds himself in the service of all that lives. It becomes his delight and his recreation. He is a new man, never weary of spending himself in the service of God's creation.¹¹⁶

There is an eternal struggle raging in man's breast between the powers of darkness and of light, and he who has not the sheet-anchor of prayer to rely upon will be a victim to the powers of darkness. The man of prayer will be at peace with himself and with the whole world; the man who goes about the affairs of the world without

a prayerful heart will be miserable and will make the world also miserable. . . .

Prayer is the only means of bringing about orderliness and peace and repose in our daily acts. . . . Take care of the vital thing and other things will take care of themselves. Rectify one angle of a square, and the other angles will be automatically right.¹¹⁷

Prayer is not an old woman's idle amusement. Properly understood and applied, it is the most potent instrument of action.¹¹⁸

When the mind is completely filled with His spirit, one cannot harbour ill-will or hatred towards any one and, reciprocally, the enemy will shed his enmity and become a friend. It is not my claim that I have succeeded in converting enemies into friends, but in numerous cases it has been my experience that, when the mind is filled with His peace, all hatred ceases. An unbroken succession of world teachers since the beginning of time have borne testimony to the same. I claim no merit for it. I know it is entirely due to God's grace.¹¹⁹

One with a wicked heart can never be conscious of the all-purifying presence of God.¹²⁰

God answers prayer in His own way, not ours. His ways are different from the ways of mortals. Hence they are inscrutable. Prayer presupposes faith. No prayer goes in vain. Prayer is like any other action. It bears fruit whether we see it or not, and the fruit of heart prayer is far more potent than action so-called.¹²¹

17. MY HINDUISM IS NOT EXCLUSIVE

All-embracing

FOR ME Hinduism is all-sufficing. Every variety of belief finds protection under its ample fold.¹²²

I can no more describe my feelings for Hinduism than for my own wife. She moves me as no other woman in the world can. Not that she has no faults; I dare say she has many more than I see myself. But the feeling of an indescribable bond is there. Even so I feel for and about Hinduism with all its faults and limitations.¹²³

. . . Hinduism is not an exclusive religion. In it there is room for the worship of all the prophets in the world. It is not a missionary religion in the ordinary sense of the term. It has no doubt absorbed many tribes in its fold, but this absorption has been of an evolutionary, imperceptible character. Hinduism tells every one to worship God according to his own faith or Dharma and so it lives at peace with all the religions.¹²⁴

There is nothing in the world that would keep me from professing Christianity or any other faith, the moment I felt the truth of and the need for it. Where there is fear, there is no religion. . . . If I could call myself, say, a Christian, or a Mussalman, with my own interpretation of the Bible or the Koran, I should not hesitate to call myself either. For then Hindu, Christian and Mussalman would be synonymous terms. I do believe that in the other world there are neither Hindus, nor Christians nor Mussalmans. There all are judged not according to their labels, or professions, but according to their actions, irrespective of their professions. During our earthly existence there will always be these labels. I, therefore, prefer to retain the label of my forefathers so long as it does not cramp my growth and does not debar me from assimilating all that is good anywhere else.¹²⁵

I know that friends get confused when I say I am a Sanatanist Hindu and they fail to find in me things they associate with a man usually labelled as such. But that is because, in spite of my being a staunch Hindu, I find room in my faith for Christian and Islamic and Zoroastrian teaching, and, therefore, my Hinduism *seems* to some to be a conglomeration and some have even dubbed me an eclectic. Well, to call a man eclectic is to say that he has no faith, but mine is a broad faith which does not oppose Christians—not even a Plymouth Brother—not even the most fanatical Mussalman. It is a faith based on the broadest possible toleration. I refuse to abuse a man for his fanatical deeds because I try to see them from his point of view. It is that broad faith that sustains me. It is a somewhat embarrassing position, I know—but to others, not to me!¹²⁶

The chief value of Hinduism lies in holding the actual belief that all life (not only human beings, but all sentient beings) is one, i.e., all life coming from the One universal source, call it Allah, God or Parameshwara.¹²⁷

My Hinduism is not sectarian. It includes all that I know to be best in Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. . . . Truth is my religion and *ahimsa* is the only way of its realization. I have rejected once and for all the doctrine of the sword.¹²⁸

Hinduism and Ahimsa

Hinduism with its message of *ahimsa* is to me the most glorious religion in the world—as my wife to me is the most beautiful woman in the world—but others may feel the same about their own religion.¹²⁹

The most distinctive and the largest contribution of Hinduism to India's culture is the doctrine of *ahimsa*. It has given a definite bias to the history of the country for the last three thousand years and over and it has not ceased to be a living force in the lives of India's millions even to-day. It is a growing doctrine, its message is still being delivered. Its teaching has so far permeated our people that

an armed revolution has almost become an impossibility in India not because, as some would have it, we as a race are physically weak, for it does not require much physical strength so much as a devilish will to press a trigger to shoot a person, but because the tradition of *ahimsa* has struck deep root among the people.¹³⁰

Mother Gita

I do not believe that the Gita teaches violence for doing good. It is pre-eminently a description of the duel that goes on in our own hearts. The divine author has used a historical incident for inculcating the lesson of doing one's duty even at the peril of one's life. It inculcates performance of duty irrespective of the consequences, for we mortals, limited by our physical frames, are incapable of controlling actions, save our own. The Gita distinguished between the powers of light and darkness and demonstrates their incompatibility.¹³¹

Though I admire much in Christianity, I am unable to identify myself with orthodox Christianity. . . . Hinduism as I know it entirely satisfies my soul, fills my whole being, and I find a solace in the Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount. Not that I do not prize the ideal presented therein; not that some of the precious teachings in the Sermon on the Mount have not left a deep impression upon me, but I must confess . . . that, when doubt haunts me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon, I turn to the Bhagavad Gita, and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. My life has been full of external tragedies, and if they have not left any visible and indelible effect on me, I owe it to the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita.¹³²

As for myself, I run to my Mother Gita whenever I find myself in difficulties, and up to now she has never failed to comfort me. It is possible that those who are getting comfort from the Gita may get greater help, and see

something altogether new, if they come to know the way in which I understand it from day to day.¹³³

Today the Gita is not only my Bible or my Koran; it is more than that—it is my mother. I lost my earthly mother who gave me birth long ago; but this eternal mother has completely filled her place by my side ever since. She has never changed, she has never failed me. When I am in difficulty or distress, I seek refuge in her bosom.¹³⁴

The Way of the Buddha

It is my deliberate opinion that the essential part of the teachings of the Buddha now forms an integral part of Hinduism. It is impossible for Hindu India today to retrace her steps and go behind the great reformation that Gautama effected in Hinduism. By his immense sacrifice, by his great renunciation, and by the immaculate purity of his life he left an indelible impress upon Hinduism, and Hinduism owes an eternal debt of gratitude to that great teacher. . . . What Hinduism did not assimilate of what passes as Buddhism today was not an essential part of the Buddha's life and his teachings.

It is my fixed opinion that Buddhism or, rather, the teaching of the Buddha found its full fruition in India and it could not be otherwise, for Gautama was himself a Hindu of Hindus. He was saturated with the best that was in Hinduism, and he gave life to some of the teachings that were buried in the Vedas and which were overgrown with weeds. His great Hindu spirit cut its way through the forest of words, meaningless words, which had overlaid the golden truth that was in the Vedas. He made some of the words in the Vedas yield a meaning to which the men of his generation were utter strangers, and he found in India the most congenial soil. And wherever the Buddha went, he was followed by and surrounded not by non-Hindus but Hindus, those who were themselves saturated with Vedic law. But the Buddha's teaching, like his heart, was all-expanding and all-embracing and so it has survived his own body and swept across the face of the earth. And

at the risk of being called a follower of the Buddha, I claim this achievement as a triumph of Hinduism. The Buddha never rejected Hinduism, but he broadened its base. He gave it a new life and a new interpretation. But . . . I want to submit to you that the teaching of the Buddha was not assimilated in its fulness whether it was in Ceylon, or in Burma, or in China, or in Tibet. . . .¹³⁵

Moral Government of World

I have heard it contended times without number and I have read in books also claiming to express the spirit of Buddhism that the Buddha did not believe in God. In my humble opinion such a belief contradicts the very central fact of the Buddha's teaching. . . . The confusion has arisen over his rejection, and just rejection, of all the base things that passed in his generation under the name of God. He undoubtedly rejected the notion that a being called God was actuated by malice, could repent of his actions and, like the kings of the earth, could possibly be open to temptations and bribes and could possibly have favourites. His whole soul rose in mighty indignation against the belief that a being called God required for his satisfaction the living blood of animals in order that he might be pleased—animals who were his own creation. He, therefore, reinstated God in the right place and dethroned the usurper who for the time being seemed to occupy that White Throne. He emphasized and re-declared the eternal and unalterable existence of the moral government of this universe. He unhesitatingly said that the law was God Himself.

God's laws are eternal and unalterable and not separable from God Himself. It is an indispensable condition of His very perfection. And hence the great confusion that the Buddha disbelieved in God and simply believed in the moral law, and because of this confusion about God Himself, arose the confusion about the proper understanding of the great word *Nirvana*. *Nirvana* is undoubtedly not utter extinction. So far as I have been able to understand the central fact of the Buddha's life, *Nirvana* is utter extinction of all that is base in us, all that is vicious in us, all that

is corrupt and corruptible in us. *Nirvana* is not like the black, dead peace of the grave, but the living peace, the living happiness of a soul which is conscious of itself, and conscious of having found its own abode in the heart of the Eternal. . . .

Great as the Buddha's contribution to humanity was in restoring God to His eternal place, in my humble opinion, greater still was his contribution to humanity in his exacting regard of all life, be it ever so low.¹³⁶

Christianity in the West

It is my firm opinion that Europe today represents not the spirit of God or Christianity, but the spirit of Satan. And Satan's successes are the greatest when he appears with the name of God on his lips. Europe is today only nominally Christian. In reality it is worshipping Mammon. 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom.' Thus really spoke Jesus Christ. His so-called followers measure their moral progress by their material possessions.¹³⁷

It is a very curious commentary on the West that although it professes Christianity, there is no Christianity or Christ in the West, or there should have been no war. That is how I understand the message of Jesus.¹³⁸

Christianity became disfigured when it went to the West. I am sorry to have to say that.¹³⁹

I ask my Christian brethren . . . not to take their Christianity as it is interpreted in the West. There, we know, they fight with one another as never before. After all, Jesus was an Asiatic depicted as wearing the Arabian flowing robe. He was the essence of meekness. I hope that the Christians of India will express in their lives Jesus the crucified, of the Bible, and not as interpreted in the West with her blood-stained fingers. I have no desire to criticize the West. I know and value the many virtues of the West. But I am bound to point out that Jesus of Asia is misrepresented in the West except in individuals.¹⁴⁰

The indirect influence of Christianity has been to quicken Hinduism into life. . . . But the effect of Christianity upon India in general must be judged by the life lived in our midst by the average Christian and its effect upon us. I am sorry to have to record my opinion that it has been disastrous.¹⁴¹

Personality of Christ

I may say that I have never been interested in a historical Jesus. I should not care if it was proved by someone that the man called Jesus never lived, and that [what] was narrated in the Gospels was a figment of the writer's imagination. For the Sermon on the Mount would still be true for me.¹⁴²

I cannot ascribe exclusive divinity to Jesus. He is as divine as Krishna or Rama or Mahomed or Zoroaster. Similarly, I do not regard every word of the Bible as the inspired word of God, even as I do not regard every word of the Vedas or the Koran as inspired. The sum total of each of these books is certainly inspired, but I miss that inspiration in many of the things taken individually. The Bible is as much a book of religion with me as the Gita and the Koran.¹⁴³

Though I cannot claim to be a Christian in the sectarian sense, the example of Jesus' suffering is a factor in the composition of my undying faith in non-violence which rules all my actions, wordly and temporal.¹⁴⁴

What Christ Means to Me

What . . . does Jesus mean to me? To me, He was one of the greatest teachers humanity has ever had. To His believers, He was God's only begotten Son. Could the fact that I do or do not accept this belief make Jesus have any more or less influence in my life? Is all the grandeur of His teaching and of His doctrine to be forbidden to me? I cannot believe so.¹⁴⁵

To me it [the word 'begotten'] implies a spiritual birth. My interpretation, in other words, is that in Jesus' own life is the key of His nearness to God; that He expressed,

as no other could, the spirit and will of God. It is in this sense that I see Him and recognize Him as the Son of God.¹⁴⁶

I believe that it is impossible to estimate the merits of the various religions of the world, and, moreover, I believe that it is unnecessary and harmful even to attempt it. But each one of them, in my judgement, embodies a common motivating force: the desire to uplift man's life and give it purpose. And because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that He belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world, to all races and people—it matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith, or worship a God inherited from their ancestors.¹⁴⁷

There is much ignorance and superstition in India. But deep down in us is that faith in God—the instinct for religion.¹⁴⁸

If Mahomed came to India today, he would disown many of his so-called followers and own me as a true Muslim, as Jesus would own me as a true Christian.¹⁴⁹

“How can we bring man back to God or the teaching of Jesus, or that of Mahomed?” I might give the answer that Jesus gave to one of his followers: “Do the will of my Father who is in Heaven, not merely say Lord, Lord.” That holds true of you, me and everybody. If we have faith in the living God, all will be well with us. I hope not to lose that faith even to my dying day. In spite of my numerous failings and shortcomings of which I am but too well aware, my faith in God is burning brighter every day.¹⁵⁰

If it did not, I would take the same prescription that I gave to women threatened with dishonour and with no prospect of help or escape, viz., commit suicide.¹⁵¹

Islam a Religion of Peace

I do regard Islam to be a religion of peace in the same sense as Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism are. No doubt there are differences in degree, but the object of these religions is peace.¹⁵²

Islam's distinctive contribution to India's national culture is its unadulterated belief in the oneness of God and a practical application of the truth of the brotherhood of man for those who are nominally within its fold. I call these two distinctive contributions. For in Hinduism the spirit of brotherhood has become too much philosophized. Similarly, though philosophical Hinduism has no other god but God, it cannot be denied that practical Hinduism is not so emphatically uncompromising as Islam.¹⁵³

Use of Force

There is nothing in the Koran to warrant the use of force for conversion. The Holy Book says in the clearest language possible, 'There is no compulsion in religion'. The Prophet's whole life is a repudiation of compulsion in religion. No Mussalman, to my knowledge, has ever approved of compulsion. Islam would cease to be a world religion if it were to rely upon force for its propagation.¹⁵⁴

I have given my opinion that the followers of Islam are too free with the sword. But that is not due to the teaching of the Koran. This is due, in my opinion, to the environment in which Islam was born. Christianity has a bloody record against it not because Jesus was found wanting, but because the environment in which it spread was not responsive to his lofty teaching.¹⁵⁵

The Koran

I have more than once read the Koran. My religion enables me, obliges me, to imbibe all that is good in all the great religions of the earth.¹⁵⁶

I certainly regard Islam as one of the inspired religions and, therefore, the Holy Koran as an inspired book and Muhammad as one of the prophets.¹⁵⁷

I have come to the conclusion that the teaching of the Koran is essentially in favour of non-violence. Non-violence is better than violence, it is said in the Koran. Non-violence is enjoined as a duty; violence is permitted as a necessity.¹⁵⁸

18. RELIGION AND POLITICS

Life an Integral Whole

I CLAIM that human mind or human society is not divided into watertight compartments called social, political and religious. All act and react upon one another.¹⁵⁹

Human life being an undivided whole, no line can ever be drawn between its different compartments, nor between ethics and politics. A trader who earns his wealth by deception only succeeds in deceiving himself when he thinks that his sins can be washed away by spending some amount of his ill-gotten gains on the so-called religious purposes. One's everyday life is never capable of being separated from one's spiritual being. Both act and react upon one another.¹⁶⁰

The politician in me has never dominated a single decision of mine, and if I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics encircle us today like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries. I wish, therefore, to wrestle with the snake as I have been doing with more or less success consciously since 1894, unconsciously, as I have now discovered, ever since reaching years of discretion. Quite selfishly, as I wish to live in peace in the midst of a bellowing storm howling round me, I have been experimenting with myself and my friends by introducing religion into politics.¹⁶¹

To see the universal and all-pervading Spirit of Truth face to face, one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why my devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means.¹⁶²

I could not be leading a religious life unless I identified myself with the whole of mankind, and that I could not do unless I took part in politics. The whole gamut of man's activities today constitutes an indivisible whole. You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity. It provides a moral basis to all other activities which they would otherwise lack, reducing life to a maze of 'sound and fury signifying nothing'.¹⁶³

I felt compelled to come into the political field because I found I could not do even social work without touching politics. I feel that political work must be looked upon in terms of social and moral progress. In democracy no fact of life is untouched by politics.¹⁶⁴

For me, politics bereft of religion are absolute dirt, ever to be shunned. Politics concern nations and that which concerns the welfare of nations must be one of the concerns of a man who is religiously inclined, in other words, a seeker after God and Truth. For me, God and Truth are convertible terms, and if anyone told me that God was a god of untruth or a god of torture, I would decline to worship Him. Therefore, in politics also we have to establish the Kingdom of Heaven.¹⁶⁵

I cannot isolate politics from the deepest things of my life, for the simple reason that my politics are not corrupt, they are inextricably bound up with non-violence and truth.¹⁶⁶

I could not live for a single second without religion. Many of my political friends despair of me because they say that even my politics are derived from religion. And they are right. My politics and all other activities of mine are derived from my religion.

I go further and say that every activity of a man of religion must be derived from his religion, because religion means being bound to God, that is to say, God rules your every breath.¹⁶⁷

Indeed, religion should pervade every one of our actions. Here religion does not mean sectarianism. It means a belief in ordered moral government of the universe. It is not less real because it is unseen. This religion transcends Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc. It does not supersede them. It harmonizes them and gives them reality.¹⁶⁸

The life of the millions is my politics, from which I dare not free myself without denying my life-work and God. That my politics may take a different turn [after the 15th August 1947, when India will be free] is quite possible. But that will be determined by circumstances.¹⁶⁹

There is undoubtedly a sense in which the statement is true when I say that I hold my religion dearer than my country and that, therefore, I am a Hindu first and nationalist after. I do not become on that score less a nationalist than the best of them. I simply thereby imply that the interests of my country are identical with those of my religion. Similarly, when I say that I prize my own salvation above everything else, above the salvation of India, it does not mean that my personal salvation requires a sacrifice of India's political or any other salvation. But it implies necessarily that the two go together.¹⁷⁰

Religion is no test of nationality, but a personal matter between man and his God. In the sense of nationality they are Indians first and Indians last, no matter what religion they profess.¹⁷¹

19. TEMPLES AND IDOLATRY

Character of Idolatry

I DO not disbelieve in idol worship. An idol does not excite any feeling of veneration in me. But I think that idol worship is part of human nature. We hanker after symbolism. Why should one be more composed in a church than elsewhere? Images are an aid to worship. No Hindu considers an image to be God. I do not consider idol worship a sin.¹⁷²

I am both an idolater and an iconoclast in what I conceive to be the true senses of the terms. I value the spirit behind idol worship. It plays a most important part in the uplift of the human race. . . . I am an iconoclast in the sense that I break down the subtle form of idolatry in the shape of fanaticism that refuses to see any virtue in any other form of worshipping the Deity save one's own. This form of idolatry is more deadly for being more fine and evasive than the tangible and gross form of worship that identifies the Deity with a little bit of a stone or a golden image.¹⁷³

I am both a supporter and opponent of image worship. When image worship degenerates into idolatry and becomes encrusted with false beliefs and doctrines, it becomes a necessity to combat it as a gross social evil. On the other hand, image worship in the sense of investing one's ideal with a concrete shape is inherent in man's nature, and even valuable as an aid to devotion. Thus we worship an image when we offer homage to a book which we regard as holy or sacred. We worship an image when we visit a temple or a mosque with a feeling of sanctity or reverence. Nor do I see any harm in all this. On the contrary, endowed as man is with a finite, limited understanding, he can hardly do otherwise. Even so, far from seeing anything inherently evil or harmful in tree worship, I find in it a

thing instinct with a deep pathos and poetic beauty. It symbolizes true reverence for the entire vegetable kingdom which, with its endless panorama of beautiful shapes and forms, declares to us, as it were with a million tongues, the greatness and glory of God. . . .¹⁷⁴

Far different, however, is the case of vows and prayers which votaries offer before trees. The offering of vows and prayers for selfish ends, whether offered in churches, mosques, temples, or before trees and shrines, is a thing not to be encouraged. Making of selfish requests or offering of vows is not related to image worship as effect and cause. A personal selfish prayer is bad whether made before an image or an unseen God.

Let no one, however, from this understand me to mean that I advocate tree worship in general. I do not defend tree worship because I consider it to be a necessary aid to devotion, but only because I recognize that God manifests Himself in innumerable forms in this universe, and every such manifestation commands my spontaneous reverence.¹⁷⁵

As for idol worship, you cannot do without it in some form or other. Why does a Mussalman give his life for defending a mosque which he calls a house of God? And why does a Christian go to a church, and when he is required to take an oath, he swears by the Bible? Not that I see any objection to it. And what is it if not idolatry to give untold riches for building mosques and tombs? And what do the Roman Catholics do when they kneel before Virgin Mary and before saints, quite imaginary figures in stone or painted on canvas or glass? Even so, it is not the stone we worship, but it is God we worship in images of stone or metal, however rude they may be.¹⁷⁶

Places of Worship

I do not regard the existence of temples as a sin or superstition. Some form of common worship and a common place of worship appear to be a human necessity. Whether the temples should contain images or not is a matter of temperament and taste. I do not regard a Hindu or a Roman Catholic place of worship containing images

as necessarily bad or superstitious and a mosque or a Protestant place of worship being good or free of superstition merely because of their exclusion of images. A symbol such as a Cross or a book may easily become idolatrous, and therefore, superstitious. And the worship of the image of Child Krishna or Virgin Mary may become ennobling and free of all superstition. It depends upon the attitude of the heart of the worshipper.¹⁷⁷

Places of worship to me are not merely brick and mortar. They are but a shadow of the reality. Against every church and every mosque and every temple destroyed, hundreds have risen in their places.¹⁷⁸

I know of no religion or sect that has done or is doing without its house of God, variously described as a temple, mosque, church, synagogue or agiari. Nor is it certain that any of the great reformers including Jesus destroyed or discarded temples altogether. All of them sought to banish corruption from temples as well as from society. . . . I have ceased to visit temples for years, but I do not regard myself on that account as a better person than before. My mother never missed going to the temple when she was in a fit state to go there. Probably her faith was far greater than mine, though I do not visit temples.¹⁷⁹

Temples or mosques or churches . . . I make no distinction between these different abodes of God. They are what faith has made them. They are an answer to man's craving somehow to reach the Unseen.¹⁸⁰

Acquisition of consciousness [of the living presence of God within one] does not require or mean temple-going.¹⁸¹

Our bodies are the real temples rather than buildings of stone. The best place for congregational worship is in the open with the sky above as the canopy and mother earth below for the floor.¹⁸²

20. THE CURSE OF UNTOUCHABILITY

I DO not want to be reborn. But if I have to be reborn, I should be born an untouchable, so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings, and the affronts levelled at them, in order that I may endeavour to free myself and them from that miserable condition. I, therefore, prayed that, if I should be born again, I should do so not as a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra, but as an Atishudra.¹⁸³

I was wedded to the work for the extinction of 'untouchability' long before I was wedded to my wife. There were two occasions in our joint life when there was a choice between working for the untouchables and remaining with my wife and I would have preferred the first. But thanks to my good wife, the crisis was averted. In my Ashram, which is my family, I have several untouchables and a sweet but naughty girl living as my own daughter.¹⁸⁴

Love of the people brought the problem of untouchability early into my life. My mother said, 'You must not touch this boy, he is an untouchable.' 'Why not?' I questioned back, and from that day my revolt began.¹⁸⁵

Swaraj is a meaningless term, if we desire to keep a fifth of India under perpetual subjection, and deliberately deny to them the fruits of national culture. We are seeking the aid of God in this great purifying movement, but we deny to the most deserving among His creatures the rights of humanity. Inhuman ourselves, we may not plead before the Throne for deliverance from the inhumanity of others.¹⁸⁶

It is simple fanatical obstinacy to persist in persecuting man in the sacred name of religion.¹⁸⁷

For reforms of Hinduism and for its real protection, removal of untouchability is the greatest thing. . . . Removal of untouchability is . . . a spiritual process.¹⁸⁸

If untouchability lives, Hinduism must die.¹⁸⁹

I would far rather that Hinduism died than that untouchability lived.¹⁹⁰

In battling against untouchability and in dedicating myself to that battle, I have no less an ambition than to see a complete regeneration of humanity. It may be a mere dream, as unreal as the silver in the sea-shell. It is not so to me while the dream lasts, and in the words of Romain Rolland, 'Victory lies not in realization of the goal, but in a relentless pursuit after it.'¹⁹¹

Untouchability and Caste

It is as wrong to destroy caste because of the outcaste, as it would be to destroy a body because of an ugly growth in it or of a crop because of the weeds. The outcasteness, in the sense we understand it, has therefore to be destroyed altogether. It is an excess to be removed, if the whole system is not to perish. Untouchability is the product, therefore, not of the caste system, but of the distinction of high and low that has crept into Hinduism and is corroding it. The attack on untouchability is thus an attack upon this 'high-and-low'-ness. The moment untouchability goes, the caste system itself will be purified, that is to say, according to my dream, it will resolve itself into the true *Varnadharma*, the four divisions of society, each complementary of the other and none inferior or superior to any other, each as necessary for the whole body of Hinduism as any other.¹⁹²

Varnashrama Dharma

Varnashrama Dharma defines man's mission on this earth. He is not born day after day to explore avenues for amassing riches and to explore different means of livelihood; on the contrary, man is born in order that he may utilize every atom of his energy for the purpose of knowing his Maker. It restricts him, therefore, for the purpose of holding body and soul together, to the occupation of his forefathers. That and nothing more or nothing less is *Varnashrama Dharma*.¹⁹³

I do, however, believe in *varna* which is based on hereditary occupations. *Varnas* are four to mark four universal occupations,—imparting knowledge, defending the defenceless, carrying on agriculture and commerce, and performing service through physical labour. These occupations are common to all mankind, but Hinduism, having recognized them as the law of our being, has made use of it in regulating social relations and conduct. Gravitation affects us all, whether one knows its existence or not. But scientists who knew the law have made it yield results that have startled the world. Even so has Hinduism startled the world by its discovery and application of the law of *varna*. When Hindus were seized with inertia, abuse of *varna* resulted in innumerable castes, with unnecessary and harmful restrictions as to inter-marriage and inter-dining. The *varna* has nothing to do with these restrictions. People of different *varnas* may inter-marry and inter-dine. These restrictions may be necessary in the interest of chastity and hygiene. But a Brahmana who marries a Shudra girl, or vice versa, commits no offence against the law of *varnas*.¹⁹⁴

Today Brahmins and Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras are mere labels. There is utter confusion of *varna* as I understand it and I wish that all the Hindus will voluntarily call themselves Shudras. That is the only way to demonstrate the truth of Brahminism and to revive *Varnadharma* in its true state.¹⁹⁵

I believe that every man is born in the world with certain natural tendencies. Every person is born with certain definite limitations which he cannot overcome. From a careful observation of those limitations the law of *varna* was deduced. It establishes certain spheres of action for certain people with certain tendencies. This avoided all unworthy competition. Whilst recognizing limitations, the law of *varna* admitted of no distinctions of high and low; on the one hand, it guaranteed to each the fruits of his labours, and on the other, it prevented him from pressing upon his neighbours. This great law has been degraded and fallen into disrepute. But my conviction is that an ideal

social order will only be evolved when the implications of this law are fully understood and given effect to.¹⁹⁶

Inter-marriage and Inter-dining

Though there is in *Varnashrama* no prohibition against inter-marriage and inter-dining, there can be no compulsion. It must be left to the unfettered choice of the individual as to where he or she will marry or dine.¹⁹⁷

Caste

I consider the four divisions alone to be fundamental, natural and essential. The innumerable subcastes are sometimes a convenience, often a hindrance. The sooner there is fusion the better.¹⁹⁸

From the economic point of view, its value was once very great. It ensured hereditary skill; it limited competition. It was the best remedy against pauperism. And it had all the advantages of trade guilds. Although it did not foster adventure or invention there, it is not known to have come in the way either. . . .

Historically speaking, caste may be regarded as man's experiment or social adjustment in the laboratory of Indian society. If we can prove it to be a success, it can be offered to the world as a leaven and as the best remedy against heartless competition and social disintegration born of avarice and greed.¹⁹⁹

Caste and Varna

. . . I have frequently said that I do not believe in caste in the modern sense. It is an excrescence and a handicap on progress. Nor do I believe in inequalities between human beings. We are all absolutely equal. But equality is of souls and not bodies. Hence, it is a mental state. We need to think of, and to assert, equality because we see great inequalities in the physical world. We have to realize equality in the midst of this apparent external inequality. The assumption of superiority by any person over any other is a sin against God and man. Thus caste, in so far as it connotes distinctions in status, is an evil.²⁰⁰

Caste distinctions have taken such deep root amongst us that they have also infected the Muslims, Christians and followers of other religions in India. It is true that class barriers are also to be found in more or less degree in other parts of the world. This means that it is a distemper common to the human race. It can be eliminated only by the inculcation of religion in its true sense. I have not found sanction for such barriers and distinctions in the scriptures of any religion.

In the eye of religion all men are equal. Learning, intellect or riches do not entitle one to claim superiority over those who are lacking in these. If any person is suffused and sanctified with the purifying essence and the discipline of true religion, he regards himself under the obligation to share his advantages with those who have fewer. That being so, in our present fallen state, true religion requires us all to become Atishudras by choice.

We must regard ourselves not as owners, but as trustees of our wealth, and use it for the service of society, taking for ourselves no more than a fair return for service rendered. Under this system there would be none poor, none rich. All religions would be held equal. All quarrels arising out of religion, caste or economic grievance would cease to disturb peace on earth.²⁰¹

V : NON-VIOLENCE

21. THE GOSPEL OF NON-VIOLENCE

The Law of Our Species

I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist. The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the *rishis* and saints. It is meant for the common people as well. Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law—to the strength of the spirit. . . .

The *rishis* who discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence were greater geniuses than Newton. They were themselves greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realized their uselessness, and taught a weary world that its salvation lay not through violence but through non-violence.¹

My Ahimsa

I know only one way—the way of *ahimsa*. The way of *himsa* goes against my grain. I do not want to cultivate the power to inculcate *himsa*. . . . The faith sustains me that He is the help of the helpless, that He comes to one's succour only when one throws himself on His mercy. It is because of that faith that I cherish the hope that God will one day show me a path which I may confidently commend to the people.²

I have been a 'gambler' all my life. In my passion for finding truth and in relentlessly following out my faith in non-violence, I have counted no stake too great. In doing so I have erred, if at all, in the company of the most distinguished scientist of any age and any clime.³

I learnt the lesson of non-violence from my wife, when I tried to bend her to my will. Her determined resistance to my will, on the one hand, and her quiet submission to the suffering my stupidity involved, on the other, ultimately made me ashamed of myself and cured me of my stupidity in thinking that I was born to rule over her and, in the end, she became my teacher in non-violence.⁴

The doctrine that has guided my life is not one of inaction but of the highest action.⁵

I must not . . . flatter myself with the belief—nor allow friends . . . to entertain the belief that I have exhibited any heroic and demonstrable non-violence in myself. All I can claim is that I am sailing in that direction without a moment's stop.⁶

Character of Non-violence

(1) Non-violence is the law of the human race and is infinitely greater than and superior to brute force.

(2) In the last resort it does not avail to those who do not possess a living faith in the God of Love.

(3) Non-violence affords the fullest protection to one's self-respect and sense of honour, but not always to possession of land or movable property, though its habitual practice does prove a better bulwark than the possession of armed men to defend them. Non-violence, in the very nature of things, is of no assistance in the defence of ill-gotten gains and immoral acts.

(4) Individuals or nations who would practise non-violence must be prepared to sacrifice (nations to the last man) their all except honour. It is, therefore, inconsistent with the possession of other people's countries, i.e., modern imperialism, which is frankly based on force for its defence.

(5) Non-violence is a power which can be wielded equally by all—children, young men and women or grown-up people, provided they have a living faith in the God of Love and have therefore equal love for all mankind. When non-violence is accepted as the law of life, it must pervade the whole being and not be applied to isolated acts.

(6) It is a profound error to suppose that, whilst the law is good enough for individuals, it is not for masses of mankind.⁷

For the way of non-violence and truth is sharp as the razor's edge. Its practice is more than our daily food. Rightly taken, food sustains the body; rightly practised non-violence sustains the soul. The body food we can only take in measured quantities and at stated intervals; non-violence, which is the spiritual food, we have to take in continually. There is no such thing as satiation. I have to be conscious every moment that I am pursuing the goal and have to examine myself in terms of that goal.

Changeless Creed

The very first step in non-violence is that we cultivate in our daily life, as between ourselves, truthfulness, humility, tolerance, loving kindness. Honesty, they say in English, is the best policy. But, in terms of non-violence, it is not mere policy. Policies may and do change. Non-violence is an unchangeable creed. It has to be pursued in face of violence raging around you. Non-violence with a non-violent man is no merit. In fact it becomes difficult to say whether it is non-violence at all. But when it is pitted against violence, then one realizes the difference between the two. This we cannot do unless we are ever wakeful, ever vigilant, ever striving.⁸

The only thing lawful is non-violence. Violence can never be lawful in the sense meant here, i.e., not according to man-made law but according to the law made by Nature for man.⁹

Faith in God

[A living faith in non-violence] is impossible without a living faith in God. A non-violent man can do nothing save by the power and grace of God. Without it he won't have the courage to die without anger, without fear and without retaliation. Such courage comes from the belief that God sits in the hearts of all and that there should be no fear in the presence of God. The knowledge of the

omnipresence of God also means respect for the lives even of those who may be called opponents. . . .¹⁰

Non-violence is an active force of the highest order. It is soul force or the power of Godhead within us. Imperfect man cannot grasp the whole of that Essence—he would not be able to bear its full blaze, but even an infinitesimal fraction of it, when it becomes active within us, can work wonders.

The sun in the heavens fills the whole universe with its life-giving warmth. But if one went too near it, it would consume him to ashes. Even so it is with Godhead. We become Godlike to the extent we realize non-violence; but we can never become wholly God.¹¹

The fact is that non-violence does not work in the same way as violence. It works in the opposite way. An armed man naturally relies upon his arms. A man who is intentionally unarmed relies upon the Unseen Force called God by poets, but called the Unknown by scientists. But that which is unknown is not necessarily non-existent. God is the Force among all forces known and unknown. Non-violence without reliance upon that Force is poor stuff to be thrown in the dust.¹²

Consciousness of the living presence of God within one is undoubtedly the first requisite.¹³

Religious Basis

My claim to Hinduism has been rejected by some, because I believe and advocate non-violence in its extreme form. They say that I am a Christian in disguise. I have been even seriously told that I am distorting the meaning of the Gita, when I ascribe to that great poem the teaching of unadulterated non-violence. Some of my Hindu friends tell me that killing is a duty enjoined by the Gita under certain circumstances. A very learned *shastri* only the other day scornfully rejected my interpretation of the Gita and said that there was no warrant for the opinion held by some commentators that the Gita represented the eternal duel between forces of evil and good, and inculcated the duty of

eradicating evil within us without hesitation, without tenderness.

I state these opinions against non-violence in detail, because it is necessary to understand them, if we would understand the solution I have to offer. . . .

I must be dismissed out of consideration. My religion is a matter solely between my Maker and myself. If I am a Hindu, I cannot cease to be one even though I may be disowned by the whole of the Hindu population. I do however suggest that non-violence is the end of all religions.¹⁴

The lesson of non-violence is present in every religion, but I fondly believe that, perhaps, it is here in India that its practice has been reduced to a science. Innumerable saints have laid down their lives in *tapashcharya* until poets had felt that the Himalayas became purified in their snowy whiteness by means of their sacrifice. But all this practice of non-violence is nearly dead today. It is necessary to revive the eternal law of answering anger by love and of violence by non-violence; and where can this be more readily done than in this land of King Janaka and Ramachandra?¹⁵

Hinduism's Unique Contribution

Non-violence is common to all religions, but it has found the highest expression and application in Hinduism. (I do not regard Jainism or Buddhism as separate from Hinduism).

Hinduism believes in the oneness not of merely all human life but in the oneness of all that lives. Its worship of the cow is, in my opinion, its unique contribution to the evolution of humanitarianism. It is a practical application of the belief in the oneness and, therefore, sacredness of all life. The great belief in transmigration is a direct consequence of that belief. Finally, the discovery of the law of *Varnashrama* is a magnificent result of the ceaseless search for truth.¹⁶

I have also been asked wherefrom in Hinduism I have unearthed *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* is in Hinduism, it is in Christianity as well as in Islam. Whether you agree with me or

not, it is my bounden duty to preach what I believe to be the truth as I see it. I am also sure that *ahimsa* has never made anyone a coward.¹⁷

The Koran and Non-violence

[Barisaheb] assured me that there was warrant enough for Satyagraha in the Holy Koran. He agreed with the interpretation of the Koran to the effect that, whilst violence under certain well-defined circumstances is permissible, self-restraint is dearer to God than violence, and that is the law of love. That is Satyagraha. Violence is concession to human weakness, Satyagraha is an obligation. Even from the practical standpoint it is easy enough to see that violence can do no good and only do infinite harm.¹⁸

Some Muslim friends tell me that Muslims will never subscribe to unadulterated non-violence. With them, they say, violence is as lawful and necessary as non-violence. The use of either depends upon circumstances. It does not need Koranic authority to justify the lawfulness of both. That is the well-known path the world has traversed through the ages. There is no such thing as unadulterated violence in the world. But I have heard it from many Muslim friends that the Koran teaches the use of non-violence. It regards forbearance as superior to vengeance. The very word Islam means peace, which is non-violence. Badshahkhan, a staunch Muslim who never misses his *namaz* and *Ramzan*, has accepted out and out non-violence as his creed. It would be no answer to say that he does not live up to his creed, even as I know to my shame that I do not. If there is a difference in our actions, the difference is not one of kind, it is of degree. But, argument about non-violence in the Holy Koran is an interpolation, not necessary for my thesis.¹⁹

No Matter of Diet

Ahimsa is not a mere matter of dietetics, it transcends it. What a man eats or drinks matters little; it is the self-denial, the self-restraint behind it that matters. By all means practise as much restraint in the choice of the articles of your

diet as you like. The restraint is commendable, even necessary, but it touches only the fringe of *ahimsa*. A man may allow himself a wide latitude in the matter of diet and yet may be a personification of *ahimsa* and compel our homage, if his heart overflows with love and melts at another's woe, and has been purged of all passions. On the other hand a man always over-scrupulous in diet is an utter stranger to *ahimsa* and a pitiful wretch, if he is a slave to selfishness and passions and is hard of heart.²⁰

Road to Truth

My love for non-violence is superior to every other thing mundane or supramundane. It is equalled only by my love for Truth, which is to me synonymous with non-violence through which and which alone I can see and reach Truth.²¹

. . . Without *ahimsa* it is not possible to seek and find Truth. *Ahimsa* and Truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are like the two sides of a coin, or rather of a smooth, unstamped, metallic disc. Who can say which is the obverse, and which is the reverse? Nevertheless *ahimsa* is the means; Truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach, and so *ahimsa* is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later. When once we have grasped this point, final victory is beyond question.²²

Ahimsa is not the goal. Truth is the goal. But we have no means of realizing truth in human relationships except through the practice of *ahimsa*. A steadfast pursuit of *ahimsa* is inevitably bound to truth—not so violence. That is why I swear by *ahimsa*. Truth came naturally to me. *Ahimsa* I acquired after a struggle.

But *ahimsa* being the means, we are naturally more concerned with it in our everyday life. It is *ahimsa*, therefore, that our masses have to be educated in. Education in truth follows from it as a natural end.²³

No Cover for Cowardice

My non-violence does not admit of running away from danger and leaving dear ones unprotected. Between violence and cowardly flight, I can only prefer violence to cowardice. I can no more preach non-violence to a coward than I can tempt a blind man to enjoy healthy scenes. Non-violence is the summit of bravery. And in my own experience, I have had no difficulty in demonstrating to men trained in the school of violence the superiority of non-violence. As a coward, which I was for years, I harboured violence. I began to prize non-violence only when I began to shed cowardice. Those Hindus who ran away from the post of duty when it was attended with danger did so not because they were non-violent, or because they were afraid to strike, but because they were unwilling to die or even suffer an injury. A rabbit that runs away from the bull terrier is not particularly non-violent. The poor thing trembles at the sight of the terrier and runs for very life.²⁴

Non-violence is not a cover for cowardice, but it is the supreme virtue of the brave. Exercise of non-violence requires far greater bravery than that of swordsmanship. Cowardice is wholly inconsistent with non-violence. Translation from swordsmanship to non-violence is possible and, at times, even an easy stage. Non-violence, therefore, presupposes ability to strike. It is a conscious deliberate restraint put upon one's desire for vengeance. But vengeance is any day superior to passive, effeminate and helpless submission. Forgiveness is higher still. Vengeance too is weakness. The desire for vengeance comes out of fear of harm, imaginary or real. A dog barks and bites when he fears. A man who fears no one on earth would consider it too troublesome even to summon up anger against one who is vainly trying to injure him. The sun does not wreak vengeance upon little children who throw dust at him. They only harm themselves in the act.²⁵

The path of true non-violence requires much more courage than violence.²⁶

The minimum that is required of a person wishing to cultivate the *ahimsa* of the brave is first to clear one's

thought of cowardice and, in the light of the clearance, regulate his conduct in every activity, great or small. Thus the votary must refuse to be cowed down by his superior, without being angry. He must, however, be ready to sacrifice his post, however remunerative it may be. Whilst sacrificing his all, if the votary has no sense of irritation against his employer, he has *ahimsa* of the brave in him.

Assume that a fellow-passenger threatens my son with assault and I reason with the would-be-assailant who then turns upon me. If then I take his blow with grace and dignity, without harbouring any ill-will against him, I exhibit the *ahimsa* of the brave. Such instances are of every day occurrence and can be easily multiplied. If I succeed in curbing my temper every time and, though able to give blow for blow, I refrain, I shall develop the *ahimsa* of the brave which will never fail me and which will compel recognition from the most confirmed adversaries.²⁷

Inculcation of cowardice is against my nature. Ever since my return from South Africa, where a few thousand had stood up not unsuccessfully against heavy odds, I have made it my mission to preach true bravery which *ahimsa* means.²⁸

Humility Essential

If one has. . . pride and egoism, there is no non-violence. Non-violence is impossible without humility. My own experience is that, whenever I have acted non-violently, I have been led to it and sustained in it by the higher promptings of an unseen power. Through my own will I should have miserably failed. When I first went to jail, I quailed at the prospect. I had heard terrible things about jail life. But I had faith in God's protection. Our experience was that those who went to jail in a prayerful spirit came out victorious, those who had gone in their own strength failed. There is no room for self-pitying in it either when you say God is giving you the strength. Self-pity comes when you do a thing for which you expect recognition from others. But here there is no question of recognition.²⁹

It was only when I had learnt to reduce myself to zero that I was able to evolve the power of Satyagraha in South Africa.³⁰

22. THE POWER OF NON-VIOLENCE

NON-VIOLENCE in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means the pitting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire to save his honour, his religion, his soul and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its regeneration.³¹

Active Force

The non-violence of my conception is a more active and more real fighting against wickedness than retaliation whose very nature is to increase wickedness. I contemplate a mental and, therefore, a moral opposition to immoralities. I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant's sword, not by putting up against it a sharper-edged weapon, but by disappointing his expectation that I would be offering physical resistance. The resistance of the soul that I should offer instead would elude him. It would at first dazzle him, and at last compel recognition from him, which recognition would not humiliate him but would uplift him. It may be urged that this again is an ideal state. And so it is. The propositions from which I have drawn my arguments are as true as Euclid's definitions, which are none the less true because in practice we are unable to even draw Euclid's line on a blackboard. But even a geometer finds it impossible to get on without bearing in mind Euclid's definitions. Nor may we . . . dispense with the fundamental propositions on which the doctrine of Satyagraha is based.³²

I admit that the strong will rob the weak and that it is sin to be weak. But this is said of the soul in man, not

of the body. If it be said of the body, we could never be free from the sin of weakness. But the strength of soul can defy a whole world in arms against it. This strength is open to the weakest in body.³³

Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man. Destruction is not the law of the humans. Man lives freely by his readiness to die, if need be, at the hands of his brother, never by killing him. Every murder or other injury, no matter for what cause, committed or inflicted on another is a crime against humanity.³⁴

Non-violence is like radium in its action. An infinitesimal quantity of it embedded in a malignant growth acts continuously, silently and ceaselessly till it has transformed the whole mass of the diseased tissue into a healthy one. Similarly, even a little of true non-violence acts in a silent, subtle, unseen way and leavens the whole society.³⁵

Matchless Bravery

An armed soldier relies on his weapons for his strength. Take away from him his weapons—his gun or his sword, and he generally becomes helpless. But a person who has truly realized the principle of non-violence has the God-given strength for his weapon and the world has not known anything that can match it.³⁶

A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history.³⁷

Non-violence of the strong is any day stronger than that of the bravest soldier fully armed or a whole host.³⁸

Exercise in Faith

The hardest metal yields to sufficient heat. Even so the hardest heart must melt before sufficiency of the heat of non-violence. And there is no limit to the capacity of non-violence to generate heat.

Every action is a resultant of a multitude of forces even of a contrary nature. There is no waste of energy.

So we learn in the books on mechanics. This is equally true of human actions. The difference is that in the one case we generally know the forces at work, and when we do, we can mathematically foretell the resultant. In the case of human actions, they result from a concurrence of forces of most of which we have no knowledge. But our ignorance must not be made to serve the cause of disbelief in the power of these forces. Rather is our ignorance a cause for greater faith. And non-violence being the mightiest force in the world and also the most elusive in its working, it demands the greatest exercise of faith. Even as we believe in God in faith, so have we to believe in non-violence in faith.³⁹

Violence like water, when it has an outlet, rushes forward furiously with an overwhelming force. Non-violence cannot act madly. It is the essence of discipline. But, when it is set going, no amount of violence can crush it. For full play, it requires unsullied purity and an unquenchable faith. . . .⁴⁰

A Science

Ahimsa is a science. The word 'failure' has no place in the vocabulary of science. Failure to obtain the expected result is often the precursor to further discoveries.⁴¹

If the function of *himsa* is to devour all it comes across, the function of *ahimsa* is to rush into the mouth of *himsa*. In an atmosphere of *ahimsa* one has no scope to put his *ahimsa* to the test. It can be tested only in the face of *himsa*.⁴²

Violence can only be effectively met by non-violence. This is an old, established truth . . . that the weapon of violence, even if it was the atom bomb, became useless when matched against true non-violence. That very few understand how to wield this mighty weapon is true. It requires a lot of understanding and strength of mind. It is unlike what is needed in military schools and colleges. The difficulty one experiences in meeting *himsa* with *ahimsa* arises from weakness of mind.⁴³

The Deed, not Doer

'Hate the sin and not the sinner' is a precept which, though easy enough to understand, is rarely practised, and that is why the poison of hatred spreads in the world.

This *ahimsa* is the basis of the search for truth. I am realizing every day that the search is vain unless it is founded on *ahimsa* as the basis. It is quite proper to resist and attack a system, but to resist and attack its author is tantamount to resisting and attacking oneself. For we are all tarred with the same brush, and are children of one and the same Creator, and as such, the divine powers within us are infinite. To slight a single human being is to slight those divine powers, and thus to harm not only that Being but with Him the whole world.⁴⁴

Man and his deed are two distinct things. Whereas a good deed should call forth approbation and a wicked deed disapprobation, the doer of the deed, whether good or wicked, always deserves respect or pity as the case may be.⁴⁵

Those who seek to destroy men rather than manners adopt the latter and become worse than those whom they destroy under the mistaken belief that the manners will die with the men. They do not know the root of the evil.⁴⁶

It is the acid test of non-violence that, in a non-violent conflict, there is no rancour left behind, and in the end the enemies are converted into friends. That was my experience in South Africa, with General Smuts. He started with being my bitterest opponent and critic. Today he is my warmest friend.⁴⁷

The principal implication of *ahimsa* is that the *ahimsa* in us ought to soften and not to stiffen our opponents' attitude to us; it ought to melt him; it ought to strike a responsive chord in his heart.

As *ahimsa*-ites, can you say that you practise genuine *ahimsa*? Can you say that you receive the arrows of the opponent on your bare breasts without returning them?

Can you say that you are not angry, that you are not perturbed by his criticism?⁴⁸

By reason of life-long practice of *ahimsa*, I claim to be an expert in it, though very imperfect. Speaking in absolute terms, the more I practise it the clearer I see how far I am from the full expression of *ahimsa* in my life. It is his ignorance of this, the greatest duty of man in the world, which makes him say that in this age non-violence has little scope in the face of violence, whereas I make bold to say that in this age of the Atom Bomb unadulterated non-violence is the only force that can confound all the tricks put together of violence.⁴⁹

23. TRAINING FOR NON-VIOLENCE

“HOW ARE we to train individuals or communities in this difficult art?”

There is no royal road, except through living the creed in your life which must be a living sermon. Of course, the expression in one's own life presupposes great study, tremendous perseverance, and thorough cleansing of one's self of all the impurities. If for mastering of the physical sciences you have to devote a whole life-time, how many life-times may be needed for mastering the greatest spiritual force that mankind has known? But why worry even if it means several life-times? For, if this is the only permanent thing in life, if this is the only thing that counts, then whatever effort you bestow on mastering it is well spent. Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and everything else shall be added unto you. The Kingdom of Heaven is *ahimsa*.⁵⁰

Arms are surely unnecessary for a training in *ahimsa*. In fact the arms, if any, have to be thrown away, as the Khansaheb did in the Frontier Province. Those who hold that it is essential to learn violence before we can learn non-violence, would hold that only sinners can be saints.

Fearlessness the Pre-requisite

Just as one must learn the art of killing in the training for violence, so one must learn the art of dying in the training for non-violence. Violence does not mean emancipation from fear, but discovering the means of combating the cause of fear. Non-violence, on the other hand, has no cause for fear. The votary of non-violence has to cultivate the capacity for sacrifice of the highest type in order to be free from fear. He recks not if he should lose his land, his wealth, his life. He who has not overcome all fear cannot practise *ahimsa* to perfection. The votary of *ahimsa* has only one fear, that is of God. He who seeks refuge in God ought to have a glimpse of the *Atman* that transcends the body; and the moment one has a glimpse of the Imperishable *Atman*, one sheds the love of the perishable body. Training in non-violence is thus diametrically opposed to training in violence. Violence is needed for the protection of things external, non-violence is needed for the protection of the *Atman*, for the protection of one's honour.

This non-violence cannot be learnt by staying at home. It needs enterprise. In order to test ourselves we should learn to dare danger and death, mortify the flesh, and acquire the capacity to endure all manner of hardships. He who trembles or takes to his heels the moment he sees two people fighting is not non-violent, but a coward. A non-violent person will lay down his life in preventing such quarrels. The bravery of the non-violent is vastly superior to that of the violent. The badge of the violent is his weapon—spear, or sword, or rifle. God is the shield of the non-violent.

This is not a course of training for one intending to learn non-violence. But it is easy to evolve one from the principles I have laid down.⁵¹

Non-violence of the Brave

Non-violence does not require any outside or outward training. It simply requires the will not to kill even in retaliation and the courage to face death without revenge. This is no sermon on *ahimsa* but cold reason and the

statement of a universal law. Given the unquenchable faith in the law, no provocation should prove too great for the exercise of forbearance. This I have described as the non-violence of the brave.⁵²

That non-violence which only an individual can use is not of much use in terms of society. Man is a social being. His accomplishments to be of use must be such as any person with sufficient diligence can attain. That which can be exercised only among friends is of value only as a spark of non-violence. It cannot merit the appellation of *ahimsa*. 'Enmity vanishes before *ahimsa*' is a great aphorism. It means that the greatest enmity requires an equal measure of *ahimsa* for its abatement.

Cultivation of this virtue may need long practice, ever extending to several births. It does not become useless on that account. Travelling along the route, the pilgrim will meet richer experiences from day to day, so that he may have a glimpse of the beauty he is destined to see at the top. This will add to his zest. No one is entitled to infer from this that the path will be a continuous carpet of roses without thorns. A poet has sung that the way to reach God accrues only to the very brave, never to the faint-hearted. The atmosphere today is so much saturated with poison that one refuses to recollect the wisdom of the ancients and to perceive the varied little experience of *ahimsa* in action. 'A bad turn is neutralized by a good', is a wise saying of daily experience in practice. Why can we not see that if the sum total of the world's activities was destructive, it would have come to an end long ago? Love, otherwise, *ahimsa*, sustains this planet of ours. This much must be admitted. The precious grace of life has to be strenuously cultivated, naturally so because it is uplifting. Descent is easy, not so ascent. A large majority of us being undisciplined, our daily experience is that of fighting or swearing at one another on the slightest pretext.

This, the richest grace of *ahimsa*, will descend easily upon the owner of hard discipline.⁵³

24. APPLICATION OF NON-VIOLENCE

IF ONE does not practise non-violence in one's personal relations with others, and hopes to use it in bigger affairs, one is vastly mistaken. Non-violence like charity must begin at home.

But if it is necessary for the individual to be trained in non-violence, it is even more necessary for the nation to be trained likewise. One cannot be non-violent in one's own circle and violent outside it. Or else, one is not truly non-violent even in one's own circle; often the non-violence is only in appearance. It is only when you meet with resistance, as for instance, when a thief or a murderer appears, that your non-violence is put on its trial. You either try or should try to oppose the thief with his own weapons, or you try to disarm him by love. Living among decent people, your conduct may not be described as non-violent.

Mutual forbearance is non-violence. Immediately, therefore, you get the conviction that non-violence is the law of life, you have to practise it towards those who act violently towards you, and the law must apply to nations as individuals. Training no doubt is necessary. And beginnings are always small. But if the conviction is there, the rest will follow.⁵⁴

Universality of Non-violence

Non-violence to be a creed has to be all-pervasive. I cannot be non-violent about one activity of mine and violent about others.⁵⁵

It is a blasphemy to say that non-violence can only be practised by individuals and never by nations which are composed of individuals.⁵⁶

In my opinion—non-violence is not passivity in any shape or form. Non-violence, as I understand it, is the

most active force in the world. . . . Non-violence is the supreme law. During my half a century of experience, I have not yet come across a situation when I had to say that I was helpless, that I had no remedy in terms of non-violence.⁵⁷

Cultivation of Non-violence

I am an irrepressible optimist. My optimism rests on my belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop non-violence. The more you develop it in your own being, the more infectious it becomes till it overwhelms your surroundings and by and by might oversweep the world.⁵⁸

I have known from early youth that non-violence is not a cloistered virtue to be practised by the individual for his peace and final salvation, but it is a rule of conduct for society if it is to live consistently with human dignity and make progress towards the attainment of peace for which it has been yearning for ages past.⁵⁹

To practise non-violence in mundane matters is to know its true value. It is to bring heaven upon earth. There is no such thing as the other world. All worlds are one. There is no 'here' and no 'there'. As Jeans has demonstrated, the whole universe including the most distant stars, invisible even through the most powerful telescope in the world, is compressed in an atom

I hold it, therefore, to be wrong to limit the use of non-violence to cave-dwellers and for acquiring merit for a favoured position in the other world. All virtue ceases to have use if it serves no purpose in every walk of life.⁶⁰

Use on Mass Scale

Unfortunately for us, we are strangers to the non-violence of the brave on a mass scale. Some even doubt the possibility of the exercise of non-violence by groups, much less by masses of people. They restrict its exercise to exceptional individuals. Only, mankind can have no use of it if it is always reserved only for individuals.⁶¹

Efficacy

I have been practising with scientific precision non-violence and its possibilities for an unbroken period of over fifty years. I have applied it in every walk of life, domestic, institutional, economic and political. I know of no single case in which it has failed. Where it has seemed sometimes to have failed, I have ascribed it to my imperfections. I claim no perfection for myself. But I do claim to be a passionate seeker after Truth, which is but another name for God. In the course of that search, the discovery of non-violence came to me. Its spread is my life mission. I have no interest in living except for the prosecution of that mission.⁶²

There is no hope for the aching world except through the narrow and straight path of non-violence. Millions like me may fail to prove the truth in their own lives, that would be their failure, never of the eternal law.⁶³

25. THE NON-VIOLENT SOCIETY

I HOLD that non-violence is not merely a personal virtue. It is also a social virtue to be cultivated like the other virtues. Surely society is largely regulated by the expression of non-violence in its mutual dealings. What I ask for is an extension of it on a larger, national and international scale.⁶⁴

All society is held together by non-violence, even as the earth is held in her position by gravitation. But when the law of gravitation was discovered, the discovery yielded results of which our ancestors had no knowledge. Even so, when society is deliberately constructed in accordance with the law of non-violence, its structure will be different in material particulars from what it is today. But I cannot say in advance what the government based on non-violence will be like.

What is happening today is disregard of the law of non-violence and enthronement of violence as if it were an eternal law.⁶⁵

Society based on non-violence can only consist of groups settled in villages in which voluntary co-operation is the condition of dignified and peaceful existence.⁶⁶

The Government

A Government cannot succeed in becoming entirely non-violent, because it represents all the people. I do not today conceive of such a golden age. But I do believe in the possibility of a predominantly non-violent society. And I am working for it.⁶⁷

There remains the question as to whether in an ideal society, there should be any or no government. I do not think we need worry ourselves about this at the moment. If we continue to work for such a society, it will slowly come into being to an extent, such that the people can benefit by it. Euclid's line is one without breadth, but no one has so far been able to draw it and never will. All the same, it is only by keeping the ideal line in mind that we have made progress in geometry. What is true here is true of every ideal.

Anarchy

It must be remembered that nowhere in the world does a State without government exist. If at all it could ever come into being, it would be in India; for, ours is the only country where the attempt has, at any rate, been made. We have not yet been able to show that bravery to the degree which is necessary and for the attainment of which there is only one way. Those who have faith in the latter have to demonstrate it. In order to do so, the fear of death has to be completely shed, just as we have shed the fear of prisons.⁶⁸

Democracy and Non-violence

Science of war leads one to dictatorship pure and simple. Science of non-violence can alone lead one to pure democracy.⁶⁹

Democracy and violence can ill go together. The States that are today nominally democratic have either to become frankly totalitarian, or if they are to become truly democratic, they must become courageously non-violent.⁷⁰

Holding the view that, without the recognition of non-violence on a national scale, there is no such thing as a constitutional or democratic government, I devote my energy to the propagation of non-violence as the law of our life,—individual, social, political, national and international.

I fancy that I have seen the light, though dimly. I write cautiously for I do not profess to know the whole of the Law. If I know the success of my experiments, I know also my failures. But the successes are enough to fill me with undying hope.

I have often said that if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself. Non-violence is the means, the end for everyone is complete independence. There will be an international League only when all the nations, big or small, composing it are fully independent. The nature of that independence will correspond to the extent of non-violence assimilated by the nations concerned. One thing is certain. In a society based on non-violence, the smallest nation will feel as tall as the tallest. The idea of superiority and inferiority will be wholly obliterated.

. . . The conclusion is irresistible that for one like me, wedded to non-violence, constitutional or democratic government is a distant dream so long as non-violence is not recognized as a living force, an inviolable creed, not a mere policy. While I prate about universal non-violence, my experiment is confined to India. If it succeeds, the world will accept it without effort. There is however a big BUT. The pause does not worry me. My faith is brightest in the midst of impenetrable darkness.⁷¹

Use of Power

By its very nature, non-violence cannot 'seize' power, nor can that be its goal. *But non-violence can do more; it*

can effectively control and guide power without capturing the machinery of government. That is its beauty.

There is an exception, of course. If the non-violent non-co-operation of the people is so complete that the administration ceases to function or if the administration crumbles under the impact of a foreign invasion and a vacuum results, the people's representatives will then step in and fill it. Theoretically that is possible.

But the use of power need not necessarily be violent. A father wields power over his children; he may even punish but not by inflicting violence. The most effective exercise of power is that which irks least. Power rightly exercised must sit light as a flower; no one should feel the weight of it.

The people accepted the authority of the Congress willingly. I was on more than one occasion invested with the absolute power of dictatorship. But everybody knew that my power rested on their willing acceptance. They could set me aside at any time and I would have stepped aside without a murmur.

Prophets and supermen are born only once in an age. But if even a single individual realizes the ideal of *ahimsa* in its fullness, he covers and redeems the whole society. Once Jesus had blazed the trail, his twelve disciples could carry on his mission without his presence.

It needed the perseverance and genius of so many generations of scientists to discover the laws of electricity, but today everybody, even children use electric power in their daily life. Similarly, it will not always need a perfect being to administer an ideal State once it has come into being. What is needed is a thorough social awakening to begin with. The rest will follow.

To take an instance nearer home, I have presented to the working class the truth that true capital is not silver or gold, but the labour of their hands and feet and their intelligence. Once labour develops that awareness, it would not need my presence to enable it to make use of the power that it will release.⁷²

26. THE NON-VIOLENT STATE

MANY HAVE shaken their heads as they have said, "But you can't teach non-violence to the masses. It is only possible for individuals and that too in rare cases." That is, in my opinion, a gross self-deception. If mankind was not habitually non-violent, it would have been self-destroyed ages ago. But in the duel between forces of violence and non-violence, the latter have always come out victorious in the end.

The truth is that we have not had patience enough to wait and apply ourselves whole-heartedly to the spread of non-violence among the people as a means for political ends.⁷³

Political Power

To me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life. Political power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour.

In the ideal State, therefore, there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that that Government is best which governs the least.⁷⁴

Capitalism or Trusteeship

It is my firm conviction that if the State suppressed capitalism by violence, it will be caught in the coils of violence itself, and fail to develop non-violence at any time. The State represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a

soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence. Hence I prefer the doctrine of trusteeship.

The fear is always there that the State may use too much violence against those who differ from it. I would be very happy, indeed, if the people concerned behaved as trustees; but if they fail, I believe we shall have to deprive them of their possessions through the State with the minimum exercise of violence.

That is why I said at the Round Table Conference that every vested interest must be subjected to scrutiny, and confiscation ordered where necessary—with or without compensation as the case demanded.

What I would personally prefer would be not a centralization of power in the hands of the State, but an extension of the sense of trusteeship, as, in my opinion, the violence of private ownership is less injurious than the violence of the State. However, if it is unavoidable, I would support a minimum of State-ownership.

While admitting that man actually lives by habit, I hold that it is better for him to live by the exercise of will. I also believe that men are capable of developing their will to an extent that will reduce exploitation to a minimum.

I look upon an increase in the power of the State with the greatest fear because, although while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress.

We know of so many cases where men have adopted trusteeship, but none where the State has really lived for the poor.⁷⁵

Non-violent Swaraj

In Swaraj based on *ahimsa*, people need not know their rights, but it is necessary for them to know their duties. There is no duty but creates a corresponding right, and those only are true rights which flow from a due performance of one's duties. Hence rights of true citizenship accrue only to

those who serve the State to which they belong. And they alone can do justice to the rights that accrue to them.

Everyone possesses the right to tell lies or resort to *goon-daism*. But the exercise of such a right is harmful both to the exerciser and society. But to him who observes truth and non-violence comes prestige, and prestige brings rights. And people who obtain rights as a result of performance of duty, exercise them only for the service of society, never for themselves.

Swaraj of a people means the sum total of the Swaraj (self-rule) of individuals. And such Swaraj comes only from performance by individuals of their duty as citizens. In it no one thinks of his rights. They come, when they are needed, for better performance of duty.⁷⁶

Under Swaraj based on non-violence nobody is anybody's enemy, everybody contributes his or her due quota to the common goal, all can read and write, and their knowledge keeps growing from day to day. Sickness and disease are reduced to the minimum. No one is a pauper and labour can always find employment. There is no place under such a government for gambling, drinking and immorality or for class hatred.

The rich will use their riches wisely and usefully, and not squander them in increasing their pomp and worldly pleasures. It should not happen that a handful of rich people should live in jewelled palaces and the millions in miserable hovels devoid of sunlight or ventilation. . . .

In non-violent Swaraj there can be no encroachment upon just rights; contrariwise no one can possess unjust rights. In a well-organized State, usurpation should be an impossibility and it should be unnecessary to resort to force for dispossessing a usurper.⁷⁷

Decentralization

I suggest that, if India is to evolve along non-violent lines, it will have to decentralize many things. Centralization cannot be sustained and defended without adequate force. Simple homes from which there is nothing to take

away require no policing; the palaces of the rich must have strong guards to protect them against dacoity. So must huge factories. Rurally organized India will run less risk of foreign invasion than urbanized India well equipped with military, naval and air forces.⁷⁸

Centralization as a system is inconsistent with non-violent structure of society.⁷⁹

Modern State

It is not possible for a modern State based on force non-violently to resist forces of disorder, whether external or internal. A man cannot serve God and Mammon, nor be 'temperate and furious' at the same time. It is claimed that a State can be based on non-violence, i.e., it can offer non-violent resistance against a world combination based on armed force. Such a State was Ashoka's. The example can be repeated. But the case does not become weak even if it be shown that Ashoka's State was not based on non-violence. It has to be examined on its merits. . . .

There can be no non-violence offered by the militarily strong. Thus, Russia in order to express non-violence has to discard all her power of doing violence. What is true is that if those, who were at one time strong in armed might, change their mind, they will be better able to demonstrate their non-violence to the world and, therefore, also to their opponents.⁸⁰

27. VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM

MY EXPERIENCE teaches me that truth can never be propagated by doing violence. Those who believe in the justice of their cause have need to possess boundless patience and those alone are fit to offer civil disobedience who are above committing criminal disobedience or doing violence.⁸¹

Popular Violence

If I can have nothing to do with the organized violence of the Government, I can have less to do with the unorganized violence of the people. I would prefer to be crushed between the two.⁸²

For me popular violence is as much an obstruction in our path as the Government violence. Indeed, I can combat the Government violence more successfully than the popular. For one thing, in combating the latter, I should not have the same support as in the former.⁸³

I make bold to say that violence is the creed of no religion and that, whereas non-violence in most cases is obligatory in all, violence is merely permissible in some cases. But I have not put before India the final form of non-violence.⁸⁴

I object to violence because, when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent.⁸⁵

No Faith in Violence

It is an unshakable faith with me that a cause suffers exactly to the extent that it is supported by violence. I say this in spite of appearances to the contrary. If I kill a man who obstructs me, I may experience a sense of false security. But the security will be short-lived. For I shall not have dealt with the root cause. In due course, other men will surely rise to obstruct me. My business, therefore, is not to kill the man or men who obstruct me, but to

discover the cause that impels them to obstruct me, and deal with it.⁸⁶

I do not believe in armed risings. They are a remedy worse than the disease sought to be cured. They are a token of the spirit of revenge and impatience and anger. The method of violence cannot do good in the long run.⁸⁷

The Revolutionary

I do not deny the revolutionary's heroism and sacrifice. But heroism and sacrifice in a bad cause are so much waste of splendid energy and hurt the good cause by drawing away attention from it by the glamour of the misused heroism and sacrifice in a bad cause.

I am not ashamed to stand erect before the heroic and self-sacrificing revolutionary because I am able to pit an equal measure of non-violent men's heroism and sacrifice untarnished by the blood of the innocent. Self-sacrifice of one innocent man is a million times more potent than the sacrifice of a million men who die in the act of killing others. The willing sacrifice of the innocent is the most powerful retort to insolent tyranny that has yet been conceived by God or man.

I invite the attention of the revolutionaries to the three great hindrances to Swaraj—the incomplete spread of the spinning wheel, the discord between Hindus and Mussalmans and the inhuman ban on the suppressed classes. I ask them patiently to take their due share in this work of patient construction. It may not be spectacular enough. But on that very account it requires all the heroic patience, silent and sustained effort and self-effacement of which the tallest among the revolutionaries is capable. Impatience will blur the revolutionary's vision and lead him astray.

Slow and inglorious self-imposed starvation among the starved masses is every time more heroic than the death on the scaffold under false exaltation.⁸⁸

Prevention of Brutalization

I am more concerned in preventing the brutalization of human nature than in the preventing of the sufferings of

my own people. . . . I know that people who voluntarily undergo a course of suffering raise themselves and the whole of humanity, but I also know that people, who become brutalized in their desperate efforts to get victory over their opponents or to exploit weaker nations or weaker men, not only drag down themselves but mankind also.⁸⁹

There is no necessary charm about death on the gallows; often such death is easier than a life of drudgery and toil in malarious tracts. . . . I suggest to my friend the revolutionary that death on the gallows serves the country only when the victim is a 'spotless lamb'.⁹⁰

. . . I do not condemn everything European. But I condemn for all climes and for all times secret murders and unfair methods even for a fair cause. . . . Armed conspiracies against something satanic is like matching Satans against Satan. But since one Satan is one too many for me, I would not multiply him. . . .⁹¹

Cowardice, whether philosophical or otherwise, I abhor. And if I could be persuaded that revolutionary activity has dispelled cowardice, it will go a long way to soften my abhorrence of the method, however much I may still oppose it on principle. . . .

I do not regard killing or assassination or terrorism as good in any circumstances whatsoever. I do believe that ideas ripen quickly when nourished by the blood of martyrs. But a man who dies slowly of jungle fever in service bleeds as certainly as the one on the gallows. And if the one who dies on the gallows is not innocent of another's blood, he never had ideas that deserved to ripen.

Heroes of History

. . . To compare their (revolutionaries') activities with those of Guru Govind Singh or Washington or Garibaldi or Lenin would be most misleading and dangerous. But, by test of the theory of non-violence, I do not hesitate to say that it is highly likely that, had I lived as their contemporary and in the respective countries, I would have called every one of them a misguided patriot, even though a successful and brave warrior. . . .

I disbelieve history so far as details of acts of heroes are concerned. I accept broad facts of history and draw my own lessons for my conduct. I do not want to repeat it in so far as the broad facts contradict the highest laws of life. But I positively refuse to judge men from the scanty material furnished to us by history. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*

Kemal Pasha and De Valera, too, I cannot judge. But, for me as a believer in non-violence out and out, they cannot be my guides in life in so far as their faith in war is concerned. I believe in Krishna. But my Krishna is the Lord of the Universe, the creator, preserver and destroyer of us all. He may destroy because He creates. . . .

Revolution Suicidal. . . .

I have not the qualifications for teaching my philosophy of life. I have barely qualifications for practising the philosophy I believe. . . . The revolutionaries are at liberty to reject the whole of my philosophy. . . . But India is not like Turkey or Ireland or Russia and that revolutionary activity is suicidal at this stage of the country's life at any rate, if not for all time in a country so vast, so hopelessly divided and with the masses so deeply sunk in pauperism and so fearfully terror-struck.⁹²

The revolutionary destroys the body for the supposed benefit of the adversary's soul. . . . I do not know a single revolutionary who has even thought of the adversary's soul. His single aim has been to benefit the country, even though the adversary may perish body and soul.⁹³

I honour the anarchist for his love of the country. I honour him for his bravery in being willing to die for his country; but I ask him: Is killing honourable? Is the dagger of an assassin a fit precursor of an honourable death? I deny it.⁹⁴

I repeat my deliberate opinion that, whatever may be true of other countries, in India at least political murder can only harm the country.⁹⁵

The page of history is soiled red with the blood of those who have fought for freedom. I do not know

an instance in which nations have attained their own without having to go through an incredible measure of travail. The dagger of the assassin, the poison bowl, the bullet of the rifle-man, the spear—and all these weapons and methods of destruction have been used up to now by what I consider blind lovers of liberty and freedom. . . . I hold no brief for the terrorist.⁹⁶

Let the revolutionary pray with and for me that I may soon become that [free from passions, wholly incapable of sin]. But, meanwhile, let him take with me the one step to it which I see as clearly as day-light, viz. to win India's freedom with strictly non-violent means.⁹⁷

28. BETWEEN COWARDICE AND VIOLENCE

I WOULD risk violence a thousand times rather than risk the emasculation of a whole race.⁹⁸

Violence the Choice

I do believe that, where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. . . . I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honour than that she should, in a cowardly manner, become or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonour.

But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment. Forgiveness adorns a soldier. . . . But abstinence is forgiveness only when there is the power to punish; it is meaningless when it pretends to proceed from a helpless creature. . . .

But I do not believe India to be helpless. . . . I do not believe myself to be a helpless creature. . . . Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.⁹⁹

We do want to drive out the beast in the man, but we do not want on that account to emasculate him. And in

the process of finding his own status, the beast in him is bound now and again to put up his ugly appearance.¹⁰⁰

The world is not entirely governed by logic. Life itself involves some kind of violence and we have to choose the path of least violence.¹⁰¹

No Cowardice

I want both the Hindus and Mussalmans to cultivate the cool courage to die without killing. But if one has not that courage, I want him to cultivate the art of killing and being killed rather than, in a cowardly manner, flee from danger. For the latter, in spite of his flight, does commit mental *himsa*. He flees because he has not the courage to be killed in the act of killing.¹⁰²

My method of non-violence can never lead to loss of strength, but it alone will make it possible, if the nation wills it, to offer disciplined and concerted violence in time of danger.¹⁰³

My creed of non-violence is an extremely active force. It has no room for cowardice or even weakness. There is hope for a violent man to be some day non-violent, but there is none for a coward. I have, therefore, said more than once . . . that, if we do not know how to defend ourselves, our women and our places of worship by the force of suffering, i.e., non-violence, we must, if we are men, be at least able to defend all these by fighting.¹⁰⁴

No matter how weak a person is in body, if it is a shame to flee, he will stand his ground and die at his post. This would be non-violence and bravery. No matter how weak he is, he will use what strength he has in inflicting injury on his opponent, and die in the attempt. This is bravery, but not non-violence. If, when his duty is to face danger, he flees, it is cowardice. In the first case, the man will have love or charity in him. In the second and third cases, there would be a dislike or distrust and fear.¹⁰⁵

My non-violence does admit of people, who cannot or will not be non-violent, holding and making effective use of arms. Let me repeat for the thousandth time that non-violence is of the strongest, not of the weak.¹⁰⁶

To run away from danger, instead of facing it, is to deny one's faith in man and God, even one's own self. It were better for one to drown oneself than live to declare such bankruptcy of faith.¹⁰⁷

Self-defence by Violence

I have been repeating over and over again that he who cannot protect himself or his nearest and dearest or their honour by non-violently facing death may and ought to do so by violently dealing with the oppressor. He who can do neither of the two is a burden. He has no business to be the head of a family. He must either hide himself, or must rest content to live for ever in helplessness and be prepared to crawl like a worm at the bidding of a bully.¹⁰⁸

The strength to kill is not essential for self-defence; one ought to have the strength to die. When a man is fully ready to die, he will not even desire to offer violence. Indeed, I may put it down as a self-evident proposition that the desire to kill is in inverse proportion to the desire to die. And history is replete with instances of men who, by dying with courage and compassion on their lips, converted the hearts of their violent opponents.¹⁰⁹

Non-violence cannot be taught to a person who fears to die and has no power of resistance. A helpless mouse is not non-violent because he is always eaten by pussy. He would gladly eat the murderess if he could, but he ever tries to flee from her. We do not call him a coward, because he is made by nature to behave no better than he does.

But a man who, when faced by danger, behaves like a mouse, is rightly called a coward. He harbours violence and hatred in his heart and would kill his enemy if he could without hurting himself. He is a stranger to non-violence. All sermonizing on it will be lost on him. Bravery is foreign to his nature. Before he can understand non-violence, he has to be taught to stand his ground and even suffer death, in the attempt to defend himself against the aggressor who bids fair to overwhelm him. To do

otherwise would be to confirm his cowardice and take him further away from non-violence.

Whilst I may not actually help anyone to retaliate, I must not let a coward seek shelter behind non-violence so-called. Not knowing the stuff of which non-violence is made, many have honestly believed that running away from danger every time was a virtue compared to offering resistance, especially when it was fraught with danger to one's life. As a teacher of non-violence I must, so far as it is possible for me, guard against such an unmanly belief.¹¹⁰

Self-defence . . . is the only honourable course where there is unreadiness for self-immolation.¹¹¹

Though violence is not lawful, when it is offered in self-defence or for the defence of the defenceless, it is an act of bravery far better than cowardly submission. The latter befits neither man nor woman. Under violence, there are many stages and varieties of bravery. Every man must judge this for himself. No other person can or has the right.¹¹²

29. RESISTANCE TO AGGRESSION

I MUST live. I would not be a vassal to any nation or body. I must have absolute independence or perish. To seek to win in a clash of arms would be pure bravado. Not so if, in defying the might of one who would deprive me of my independence, I refuse to obey his will and perish unarmed in the attempt. In so doing, though I lose the body, I save my soul, i.e., my honour.¹¹³

Duty of Resistance

The true democrat is he who with purely non-violent means defends his liberty and therefore, his country's and ultimately, that of the whole of mankind. . . . But the duty of resistance accrues only to those who believe in non-violence as a creed—not to those who will calculate and will examine the merits of each case and decide whether

to approve of or oppose a particular war. It follows that such resistance is a matter for each person to decide for himself and under the guidance of the inner voice, if he recognizes its existence.¹¹⁴

The true meaning of non-resistance has often been misunderstood or even distorted. It never implies that a non-violent man should bend before the violence of an aggressor. While not returning the latter's violence by violence, he should refuse to submit to the latter's illegitimate demand even to the point of death. That is the true meaning of non-resistance. . . .

He is not to return violence by violence, but neutralize it by withholding one's hand and, at the same time, refusing to submit to the demand. This is the only civilized way of going on in the world. Any other course can only lead to a race for armaments interspersed by periods of peace which is by necessity and brought about by exhaustion, when preparations would be going on for violence of a superior order. Peace through superior violence inevitably leads to the atom bomb and all that it stands for. It is the completest negation of non-violence and of democracy which is not possible without the former.¹¹⁵

To answer brutality with brutality is to admit one's moral and intellectual bankruptcy and it can only start a vicious circle. . . .¹¹⁶

Resistance both forms [passive resistance and non-violent resistance] are, but you have to pay a very heavy price when your resistance is passive, in the sense of the weakness of the resister. Europe mistook the bold and brave resistance, full of wisdom, by Jesus of Nazareth for passive resistance, as if it was of the weak. As I read the New Testament for the first time, I detected no passivity, no weakness about Jesus as depicted in the four gospels, and the meaning became clearer to me when I read Tolstoy's *Harmony of the Gospels* and his other kindred writings. Has not the West paid heavily in regarding Jesus as a Passive Resister? Christendom has been responsible for the wars which put to shame even those described in the Old

Testament and other records, historical or semi-historical. I know that I speak under correction, for I can but claim very superficial knowledge of history—modern or ancient.¹¹⁷

To die without killing requires more heroism [than to die in the act of killing]. There is nothing very wonderful in killing and being killed in the process. But the man who offers his neck to the enemy for execution, but refuses to bend to his will, shows courage of a far higher type.¹¹⁸

The Way of Ahimsa

Ahimsa is one of the world's great principles which no power on earth can wipe out. Thousands like myself may die in trying to vindicate the ideal, but *ahimsa* will never die. And the gospel of *ahimsa* can be spread only through believers dying for the cause.¹¹⁹

Ahimsa is the highest ideal. It is meant for the brave, never for the cowardly. To benefit by others' killing, and delude oneself into the belief that one is being very religious and non-violent is sheer self-deception.¹²⁰

No power on earth can subjugate you when you are armed with the sword of *ahimsa*. It ennobles both the victor and the vanquished.¹²¹

The proper way to view the present outburst of violence throughout the world is to recognize that the technique of unconquerable non-violence of the strong has not been at all fully discovered as yet. Not an ounce of non-violent strength is ever wasted.¹²²

I do not say 'eschew violence in your dealing with robbers or thieves or with nations that may invade India'. But, in order that we are better able to do so, we must learn to restrain ourselves. It is a sign not of strength but of weakness to take up the pistol on the slightest pretext. Mutual fisticuffs are a training not in violence but in emasculation.¹²³

Whilst all violence is bad and must be condemned in the abstract, it is permissible for, it is even the duty of, a believer in *ahimsa* to distinguish between the aggressor and the defender. Having done so, he will side with the

defender in a non-violent manner, i.e., give his life in saving him. His intervention is likely to bring a speedier end to the duel, and may even result in bringing about peace between the combatants.¹²⁴

My non-violence does recognize different species of violence—defensive and offensive. It is true that in the long run the difference is obliterated, but the initial merit persists. A non-violent person is bound, when the occasion arises, to say which side is just. Thus I wished success to the Abyssinians, the Spaniards, the Czechs, the Chinese and the Poles, though in each case I wished that they could have offered non-violent resistance.¹²⁵

If war is itself a wrong act, how can it be worthy of moral support or blessings? I believe all war to be wholly wrong. But, if we scrutinize the motives of two warring parties, we may find one to be in the right and the other in the wrong. For instance, if A wishes to seize B's country, B is obviously the wronged one. Both fight with arms. I do not believe in violent warfare, but all the same, B, whose cause is just, deserves my moral help and blessings.¹²⁶

You can return blow for blow if you are not brave enough to follow the path of non-violence. But there is a moral code for the use of violence also. Otherwise, the very flames of violence will consume those who light them. I do not care if they are all destroyed. But I cannot countenance the destruction of India's freedom.¹²⁷

India's Way

I have recognized that the nation has the right, if it so wills, to vindicate her freedom even by actual violence. Only, then India ceases to be the land of my love, even though the land of my birth, even as I should take no pride in my mother if she went astray.¹²⁸

When India becomes self-supporting, self-reliant, and proof against temptations and exploitation, she will cease to be the object of greedy attraction for any power in the West or the East and will then feel secure without having to carry the burden of expensive armaments. Her internal economy will be the strongest bulwark against aggression.¹²⁹

Non-violent Resistance

History has no record of a nation having adopted non-violent resistance. If Hitler is unaffected by my suffering, it does not matter. For I shall have lost nothing worth. My honour is the only thing worth preserving. That is independent of Hitler's pity. But as a believer in non-violence, I may not limit its possibilities. Hitherto he and his likes have built upon their invariable experience that men yield to force. Unarmed men, women and children offering non-violent resistance without any bitterness in them will be a novel experience for them. Who can dare say that it is not in their nature to respond to the higher and finer forces? They have the same soul that I have. . . .

I have a call I must answer. I must deliver my message to my people. This humiliation has sunk too deep in me to remain without an outlet. I, at least, must act up to the light that has dawned on me.

. . . When I first launched out on Satyagraha, I had no companion. We were thirteen thousand men, women and children against a whole nation, capable of crushing the existence out of us. I did not know who would listen to me. It all came as in a flash. All the 13,000 did not fight. Many fell back. But the honour of the nation was saved. New history was written by the South African Satyagraha. . . .

My purpose will be fulfilled if I succeed in reaching these men's hearts and making them see that, if their non-violence does not make them feel much braver than the possession of arms and the ability to use them, they must give up their non-violence, which is another name for cowardice, and resume their arms which there is nothing but their own will to prevent them from taking back.

I present . . . a weapon not of the weak but of the brave. There is no bravery greater than a resolute refusal to bend the knee to an earthly power, no matter how great, and that without bitterness of spirit and in the fullness of faith that the spirit alone lives, nothing else does.¹³⁰

Basic Assumptions

I have argued from the analogy of what we do in families or even clans. The humankind is one big family. And if the love expressed is intense enough, it must apply to all mankind. If individuals have succeeded even with savages, why should not a group of individuals succeed with a group, say, of savages? If we can succeed with the English, surely it is merely an extension of faith to believe that we are likely to succeed with less cultured or less liberally-minded nations. I hold that, if we succeed with the English with unadulterated non-violent effort, we must succeed with the others, which is the same thing as saying, that, if we achieve freedom with non-violence, we shall defend it also with the same weapon. If we have not achieved that faith, our non-violence is a mere expedient; it is alloy, not pure gold.

In the first place, we shall never achieve freedom with doubtful non-violence; and in the second, even if we do—we shall find ourselves wholly unprepared to defend the country against an aggressor. If we have doubt about the final efficacy of non-violence, it would be far better for the Congress to revise its policy and invite the nation to training in arms. A mass organization like the Congress will be untrue to its charge if, not knowing its own mind, it misled the people into a false belief. It would be an act of cowardice. . . . Because we cease to pin our faith to non-violence, we do not necessarily become violent. We merely throw off the mask and be natural. It would be a perfectly dignified course to adopt.¹³¹

However small a nation or even a group may be, it is able, even as the individual, provided that it has one mind as also the will and the grit, to defend its honour and self-respect against a whole world in arms. Therein consists the matchless strength and beauty of the unarmed. That is non-violent defence which neither knows nor accepts defeat at any stage. Therefore, a nation or a group which has made non-violence its final policy cannot be subjected to slavery even by the atom bomb.¹³²

The Congress has declared that she would carry out the struggle for India's independence through the method of non-violence. But she has not yet decided whether she would adhere to that method for the protection of that freedom against possible foreign aggression.

To me it is a self-evident truth that, if freedom is to be shared equally by all—even physically the weakest, the lame and the halt—they must be able to contribute an equal share in its defence. How that can be possible when reliance is placed on armaments my plebian mind fails to understand. I, therefore, swear and shall continue to swear by non-violence, i.e., by Satyagraha or soul force. In it physical incapacity is no handicap and even a frail woman or a child can pit herself or himself on equal terms against a giant, armed with the most powerful weapons.¹³³

My *ahimsa* forbids me from denying credit where it is due, even though the creditor is a believer in violence. Thus, though I did not accept Subhas Bose's belief in violence and his consequent action, I have not refrained from giving unstinted praise to his patriotism, resourcefulness and bravery. Similarly, though I did not approve of the use of arms by the Union Government for aiding the Kashmiris, and though I could not approve of Sheikh Abdullah's resort to arms, I cannot possibly withhold admiration for either for their resourceful and praiseworthy conduct, especially if both the relieving troops and the Kashmiri defenders die heroically to a man. I know that if they can do so, they will perhaps change the face of India. But if the defence is purely non-violent in intention and action, I will not use the word 'perhaps', for I will be sure of change in the face of India even to the extent of converting to the defender's view the Union Cabinet, if not even the Pakistan Cabinet.

The non-violent technique, I will suggest, will be—no armed assistance to the defenders. Non-violent assistance can be sent from the Union without stint. But the defenders, whether they get such assistance or not, will defy the might of the raiders or even a disciplined army in overwhelming numbers. And defenders dying at their post of

duty without malice and without anger in their hearts against the assailants, and without the use of any arms including even their fists will mean an exhibition of heroism as yet unknown to history. Kashmir will then become a holy land shedding its fragrance not only throughout India, but the world.¹³⁴

30. THE CHOICE BEFORE INDIA

I AM not pleading for India to practise non-violence because it is weak. I want her to practise non-violence being conscious of her strength and power. No training in arms is required for realization of her strength. We seem to need it because we seem to think that we are a lump of flesh.¹³⁵

India has to make her choice. She may try, if she wishes, the way of war and sink lower than she has. . . . If India can possibly gain her freedom by war, her state will be no better and will be, probably, much worse than that of France or England. . . .

The Way of Peace

But the way of peace is open to her. Her freedom is assured if she has patience. That way will be found to be the shortest even though it may appear to be the longest to our impatient nature. The way of peace insures internal growth and stability. We reject it because we fancy that it involves submission to the will of the ruler who has imposed himself upon us. But the moment we realize that the imposition is only so called and that, through our unwillingness to suffer loss of life or property, we are party to the imposition, all we need do is to change that negative attitude of passive endorsement. The suffering to be undergone by the change will be nothing compared to the physical suffering and the moral loss we must incur in trying the way of war. And the sufferings of war harm both the parties. The sufferings in following the way of peace must benefit

both. They will be like the pleasurable travail of a new birth. . . .

The way of peace is the way of truth. Truthfulness is even more important than peacefulness. Indeed, lying is the mother of violence. A truthful man cannot long remain violent. He will perceive in the course of his search that he has no need to be violent, and he will further discover that, so long as there is the slightest trace of violence in him, he will fail to find the truth he is searching.¹³⁶

Non-violence is not an easy thing to understand, still less to practise, weak as we are. We must all act prayerfully and humbly and continually asking God to open the eyes of our understanding, being ever ready to act according to the light as we daily receive it. My task as a lover and promoter of peace, therefore, today consists in unflinching devotion to non-violence in the prosecution of the campaign for regaining our liberty. And if India succeeds in so regaining it, it will be the greatest contribution to the world peace.¹³⁷

No Imitation of West

The fashion nowadays is to take for granted that whatever America and England are doing is good enough for us. . . . War has become a matter of money and resourcefulness in inventing weapons of destruction. It is no longer a matter of personal bravery or endurance. To compass the destruction of men, women and children, it might be enough for me to press a button and drop poison on them in a second.

Do we wish to copy this method of defending ourselves? Even if we do, have we the financial ability? We complain of ever-growing military expenditure. But if we would copy America or England, we would have to increase the burden tenfold. . . .

The nation cannot be kept on the non-violent path by violence. It must grow from within to the state it may aspire to. The question, therefore, for us to consider is, "What is our immediate aspiration?" Do we first want to copy the Western nations and then, in the dim

and distant future, after having gone through the agony, retrace our steps? Or do we want to strike out an original path, or rather retain what to me is our own predominantly peaceful path and therethrough win and assert our freedom?

Here there is no question of compromise with cowardice. Either we train and arm ourselves for destruction, be it in self-defence, and in the process train for suffering too, or we merely prepare ourselves for suffering for defending the country or delivering it from domination. In either case bravery is indispensable. In the first case personal bravery is not of such importance as in the second. In the second case, too, we shall perhaps never be able to do without violence altogether. But violence then will be subservient to non-violence and will always be a diminishing factor in national life.

At the present moment, though the national creed is non-violence, in thought and word at least, we seem to be drifting towards violence. Impatience pervades the atmosphere. We are restrained from violence through our weakness. What is wanted is a deliberate giving up of violence out of strength. To be able to do this requires imagination coupled with a penetrating study of the world drift. Today the superficial glamour of the West dazzles us, and we mistake for progress the giddy dance which engages us from day to day. We refuse to see that it is surely leading us to death. Above all, we must recognize that to compete with the Western nations on their terms is to court suicide. Whereas, if we realize that, notwithstanding the seeming supremacy of violence, it is the moral force that governs the universe, we should train for non-violence with the fullest faith in its limitless possibilities. Everybody recognizes that, if a non-violent atmosphere had been maintained in 1922, we could have completely gained our end. Even as it is, we had a striking demonstration of the efficacy of non-violence crude though it was, and the substance of Swaraj then gained has never been lost. The paralyzing fear that had possessed the nation before the advent of Satyagraha has gone once for all. In my opinion, therefore, non-violence is a

matter of patient training. If we are to be saved and are to make a substantial contribution to the world's progress, ours must emphatically and predominantly be the way of peace.¹³⁸

Alternative to War

I feel in the innermost recesses of my heart, after a political experience extending over an unbroken period of close upon thirty-five years, that the world is sick unto death of blood-spilling. The world is seeking a way out, and I flatter myself with the belief that, perhaps, it will be the privilege of the ancient land of India to show that way out to the hungry world.

I have, therefore, no hesitation whatsoever in inviting all the great nations of the earth to give their hearty co-operation to India in her mighty struggle.¹³⁹

I venture to suggest, in all humility, that if India reaches her destiny through truth and non-violence, she will have made no small contribution to the world peace for which all the nations of the earth are thirsting and she would also have, in that case, made some slight return for the help that those nations have been freely giving to her.¹⁴⁰

If, in the glow of freedom, India could live up to that creed [of non-violence, non-dependence on physical force], no power on earth would ever cast an evil eye upon her. This would be India's crowning glory and her contribution to the world's progress.¹⁴¹

Non-violence of the Brave

Our non-violence has brought us to the gate of independence. Shall we renounce it after we have entered that gate? I for one am firmly convinced that non-violence of the brave, such as I have envisaged, provides the surest and most efficacious means to face foreign aggression and internal disorder just as it has done for winning independence.

A truly non-violent India will have nothing to fear from any foreign power, nor will it look to British navy and air force for her defence. I know that we have not as yet the non-violence of the brave.¹⁴²

I see clearly that, if the country cannot be turned to non-violence, it will be bad for it and the world. It will mean goodbye to freedom. It might even mean a military dictatorship. I am day and night thinking how non-violence of the brave can be cultivated.

I said at the Asiatic Conference that I hoped the fragrance of the non-violence of India would permeate the whole world. I often wonder if that hope will materialize.¹⁴³

India's Duty

India is now free, and the reality is now clearly revealed to me. Now that the burden of subjection has been lifted, all the forces of good have to be marshalled in one great effort to build a country which forsook the accustomed method of violence in order to settle human conflicts, whether it is between two States or between two sections of the same people. I have yet the faith that India will rise to the occasion and prove to the world that the birth of two new States will be not a menace, but a blessing to the rest of mankind. It is the duty of Free India to perfect the instrument of non-violence for dissolving collective conflicts, if its freedom is going to be really worth while.¹⁴⁴

[Non-violence] has enabled a mighty nation of forty crores to shake off the foreign yoke without bloodshed. It is the freedom of India that has brought freedom to Burma and Ceylon. A nation that has won freedom without the force of arms should be able to keep it, too, without the force of arms. This in spite of the fact that India has an army, a navy in the making and an air force, and these are being developed still further. I am convinced that, unless India develops her non-violent strength, she has gained nothing either for herself or for the world. Militarization of India will mean her own destruction as well as of the whole world.¹⁴⁵

31. INDIA AND THE NON-VIOLENT WAY

WHILE I admit my impotency regarding the spread of the *ahimsa* of the brave and the strong, as distinguished from that of the weak, the admission is not meant to imply that I do not know how the inestimable virtue is to be cultivated. . . . It is truer (if it is a fact) to say that India is not ready for the lesson of the *ahimsa* of the strong than that no programme has been devised for the teaching. It will be perfectly just to say that the programme . . . for the *ahimsa* of the strong is not as attractive as that devised for the non-violence of the weak has proved to be.¹⁴⁶

Mere Passive Resistance

Passive resistance, unlike non-violence, has no power to change men's hearts. . . . What is to be done to convert the poison into nectar? Is the process possible? I know that it is, and I think I know the way too. But whereas the Indian mind is ready to respond to the effort at passive resistance, it is not receptive enough to imbibe the lesson of non-violence which, and perhaps which alone, is capable of turning the *poison* into nectar.

Many admit that it is the way, but they have not the heart to adopt the golden path. I can proclaim from the house-top that non-violence has not, has never failed. The people failed to rise to it.

I do not mind being told that I do not know the technique of propagating non-violence. My critics even go so far as to suggest that I have no non-violence in myself. God alone knows men's hearts.¹⁴⁷

Let me make one thing clear. I have frankly and fully admitted that what we practised during the past thirty years was not non-violent resistance, but passive resistance which only the weak offer because they are unable, not unwilling, to offer armed resistance.

If we knew the use of non-violent resistance which only those with hearts of oak can offer, we would present to the world a totally different picture of free India instead of an India cut in twain, one part highly suspicious of the other and the two too much engaged in mutual strife to be able to think cogently of the food and clothing of the hungry and naked millions, who know no religion but that of the one and only God who appears to them in the guise of the necessities of life.¹⁴⁸

. . . It was the passivity of the weak and not the non-violence of the stout in heart, who will never surrender their sense of human unity and brotherhood even in the midst of conflict of interests, who will ever try to convert and not coerce their adversary.

If India can discover a way of sublimating the force of violence . . . and turning it into constructive, peaceful ways whereby differences of interests can be liquidated, it will be a great day indeed.¹⁴⁹

No one has a right to say that what could not be achieved during the struggle for independence is unachievable at all times. On the contrary, today there is a real opportunity to demonstrate the supremacy of *ahimsa*. True, our people have been sucked into the whirlpool of universal militarization. If even a few can keep out of it, it will be their privilege to set an example of *ahimsa* of the brave and be reckoned as the first servants of India. This cannot be demonstrated by intellect. Therefore, till it can be realized through experience, it must be accepted in faith.¹⁵⁰

Police Force

Throughout my life it has been part of my creed not to avoid the police but to assist them in prying into all my work; for I have always abhorred of secrecy and it has made my life and work easy because of my indifference to this kind of surveillance. This indifference and invariable courtesy shown to the police result in the silent conversion of several amongst them.

My indifference, however, is one thing and personal to me. As a system the police surveillance cannot but be described as a despicable thing, unworthy of a good government. It is a useless burden upon an already over-burdened tax-payer. For, the whole of this extraordinary expenditure, it must be remembered, comes from the pockets of the toiling millions.¹⁵¹

Even in a non-violent State a police force may be necessary. This, I admit, is a sign of my imperfect *ahimsa*. I have not the courage to declare that we can carry on without a police force, as I have in respect of an army. Of course, I can and do envisage a State where the police will not be necessary; but whether we shall succeed in realizing it the future alone will show.

The police of my conception will, however, be of a wholly different pattern from the present-day force. Its ranks will be composed of believers in non-violence. They will be servants, not masters, of the people. The people will instinctively render them every help, and through mutual co-operation they will easily deal with the ever-decreasing disturbances.

The police force will have some kind of arms, but they will be rarely used, if at all. In fact the policemen will be reformers. Their police work will be confined primarily to robbers and dacoits.

Quarrels between labour and capital and strikes will be few and far between in a non-violent State, because the influence of the non-violent majority will be so great as to command the respect of the principal elements in society. Similarly there will be no room for communal disturbances.¹⁵²

Under Swaraj you and I shall have a disciplined, intelligent police force that would keep order within and fight raiders from without, if by that time I or someone else does not show a better way of dealing with either.¹⁵³

Crime and Punishment

In Independent India of the non-violent type, there will be crime but no criminals. They will not be punished. Crime is a disease like any other malady and is a product of the prevalent social system. Therefore, all crime including murder will be treated as a disease. Whether such an India will ever come into being is another question.¹⁵⁴

What should our jails be like in free India? All criminals should be treated as patients and the jails should be hospitals admitting this class of patients for treatment and cure. No one commits crime for the fun of it. It is a sign of a diseased mind. The causes of a particular disease should be investigated and removed.

They need not have palatial buildings when their jails become hospitals. No country can afford that, much less can a poor country like India. But the outlook of the jail staff should be that of physicians and nurses in a hospital. The prisoners should feel that the officials are their friends. They are there to help them to regain their mental health and not to harass them in any way. The popular governments have to issue necessary orders, but meanwhile the jail staff can do not a little to humanize their administration.

What is the duty of the prisoners? . . . They should behave as ideal prisoners. They should avoid breach of jail discipline. They should put their heart and soul into whatever work is entrusted to them. For instance, the prisoners' food is cooked by themselves. They should clean the rice, *dal* or whatever cereal is used so that there are no stones and grit or weevils in them.

Whatever complaints the prisoners might have should be brought to the notice of the authorities in a becoming manner. They should so behave in their little community as to become better men when they leave the jail than when they entered it.¹⁵⁵

32. INDIA AND THE VIOLENT WAY

IF INDIA takes up the doctrine of the sword, she may gain momentary victory. Then India will cease to be the pride of my heart. I am wedded to India because I owe my all to her. I believe absolutely that she has a mission for the world. She is not to copy Europe blindly.

India's acceptance of the doctrine of the sword will be the hour of my trial. I hope I shall not be found wanting. My religion has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself. My life is dedicated to service of India through the religion of non-violence. . . .¹⁵⁶

If India makes violence her creed, and I have survived, I would not care to live in India. She will cease to evoke any pride in me. My patriotism is subservient to my religion. I cling to India like a child to its mother's breast because I feel that she gives me the spiritual nourishment I need. She has the environment that responds to my highest aspirations. When that faith is gone, I shall feel like an orphan without hope of ever finding a guardian.¹⁵⁷

Unarmed Victory

This I know that, if India comes to her own demonstrably through non-violent means, India will never want to carry a vast army, an equally grand navy and a grander air force. If her self-consciousness rises to the height necessary to give her a non-violent victory in her fight for freedom, the world values will have changed and most of the paraphernalia of war would be found to be useless. Such an India may be a mere day-dream, a childish folly. But such, in my opinion, is undoubtedly the implication of an India becoming free through non-violence. . . . Hers will be the voice of a powerful nation seeking to keep under restraint all the violent forces of the world.¹⁵⁸

What policy the National Government will adopt I cannot say. I may not even survive it much as I would love to. If I do, I would advise the adoption of non-violence to the utmost extent possible and that will be India's great contribution to the peace of the world and the establishment of a new world order. I expect that, with the existence of so many martial races in India, all of whom will have a voice in the government of the day, the national policy will incline towards militarism of a modified character. I shall certainly hope that all the effort . . . to show the efficacy of non-violence as a political force will not have gone in vain and a strong party representing true non-violence will exist in the country.¹⁵⁹

Path of Militarization

What place will India have in the comity of nations? Will she be satisfied with being a fifth-rate power. . . ? India will have long to wait before she can become a first-class military power. And for that she will have to go under the tutelage of some Western power.¹⁶⁰

. . . India will have to decide whether, attempting to become a military power, she would be content to become, at least for some years, a fifth-rate power in the world without a message. . . or whether she will, by further refining and continuing her non-violent policy, prove herself worthy of being the first nation in the world using her hard-won freedom for the delivery of the earth from the burden [of violence] which is crushing her in spite of the so-called victory [of the Allies].¹⁶¹

A free India wedded to truth and non-violence will teach the lesson of peace to the inhabitants of South Africa. But it will be for us and the Congress to decide whether a free India will follow the way of peace or the sword. It is bad enough that the small nations of the earth should denude humanity of its precious heritage; it will be awful if a sub-continent of some four hundred millions were to take to gun-powder and live dangerously.¹⁶²

Will the war-weary Asiatic countries follow in the footsteps of Japan and turn to militarization? The answer

lies in what direction India will throw its weight. . . . Will a free India present the world a lesson of peace or of hatred and violence of which the world is already sick unto death?¹⁶³

If the whole of India accepted [the eternal law of love], India will become the unquestioned leader of the whole world.¹⁶⁴

I am only hoping and praying [that. . .there] will rise a new and robust India—not warlike, basely imitating the West in all its hideousness, but a new India learning the best that the West has to give and becoming the hope not only of Asia and Africa, but the whole of aching world. . . .

In spite, however, of the madness and the vain imitation of the tinsel of the West, the hope lingers in me and many others that India shall survive this death dance and occupy the moral height that should belong to her after the training, however imperfect, in non-violence for an unbroken period of thirty-two years since 1915.¹⁶⁵

An India reduced in size but purged in spirit may still be the nursery of the non-violence of the brave and take up the moral leadership of the world, bringing a message of hope and deliverance to the oppressed and exploited races. But an unwieldy, soul-less India will merely be an imitation, and a third-rate imitation at that, of the Western military States, utterly powerless to stand up against their onslaught. I have no desire to outlive the India of my dreams.¹⁶⁶

VI: SATYAGRAHA

33. THE GOSPEL OF SATYAGRAHA

Passive Resistance

PASSIVE RESISTANCE is an all-sided sword; it can be used anyhow; it blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used. Without drawing a drop of blood it produces far-reaching results. It never rusts and cannot be stolen.¹

I am quite sure that the stoniest heart will be melted by passive resistance. . . . This is a sovereign and most effective remedy. . . . It is a weapon of the purest type. It is not the weapon of the weak. It needs far greater courage to be a passive resister than a physical resister.

It is the courage of a Jesus, a Daniel, a Cranmer, a Latimer and a Ridley who could go calmly to suffering and death, and the courage of a Tolstoy who dared to defy the Czars of Russia, that stands out as the greatest.

Indeed, one PERFECT resister is enough to win the battle of Right against Wrong.²

I claim. . . that the method of passive resistance. . . is the clearest and safest, because, if the cause is not true, it is the resisters and they alone who suffer.

Jesus Christ, Daniel and Socrates represented the purest form of passive resistance or soul force. All these teachers counted their bodies as nothing in comparison to their soul.

Tolstoy was the best and brightest (modern) exponent of the doctrine. He not only expounded it, but lived according to it. In India, the doctrine was understood and commonly practised long before it came into vogue in Europe.

It is easy to see that soul force is infinitely superior to body force. If people in order to secure redress of wrongs resort to soul force, much of the present suffering will be avoided.

In any case, the wielding of the force never causes suffering to others. So that whenever it is misused, it only injures the users and not those against whom it is used. Like virtue it has its own reward. There is no such thing as failure in the use of this kind of force.³

The Buddha fearlessly carried the war into the enemy's camp and brought down on its knees an arrogant priesthood. Christ drove out the money-changers from the temple of Jerusalem and drew down curses from Heaven upon the hypocrites and the pharisees. Both were for intensely direct action.

But even as the Buddha and Christ chastised, they showed unmistakable gentleness and love behind every act of theirs. They would not raise a finger against their enemies, but would gladly surrender themselves rather than the truth for which they lived.

The Buddha would have died resisting the priesthood, if the majesty of his love had not proved to be equal to the task of bending the priesthood. Christ died on the cross with a crown of thorns on his head, defying the might of a whole empire. And if I raise resistances of a non-violent character, I simply and humbly follow in the footsteps of the great teachers. . . .⁴

Civil Disobedience

Disobedience to be civil must be sincere, respectful, restrained, never defiant, must be based upon some well-understood principle, must not be capricious and, above all, must have no ill-will or hatred behind it.⁵

I hold the opinion firmly that civil disobedience is the purest type of constitutional agitation. Of course, it becomes degrading and despicable, if its civil, i.e., non-violent character is a mere camouflage. If the honesty of non-violence be admitted, there is no warrant for

condemnation even of the fiercest disobedience, because of the likelihood of its leading to violence.

No big or swift movement can be carried on without bold risks, and life will not be worth living if it is not attended with large risks. Does not the history of the world show that there would have been no romance in life if there had been no risks?⁶

Civil disobedience is the inherent right of a citizen. He dare not give it up without ceasing to be a man. Civil disobedience is never followed by anarchy. Criminal disobedience can lead to it. Every state puts down criminal disobedience by force. It perishes if it does not.⁷

A Satyagrahi obeys the laws of society intelligently and of his own free will, because he considers it to be his sacred duty to do so. It is only when a person has thus obeyed the laws of society scrupulously that he is in a position to judge as to which particular laws are good and just and which unjust and iniquitous. Only then does the right accrue to him of civil disobedience of certain laws in well-defined circumstances.⁸

Condition Precedent

The first indispensable condition precedent to any civil resistance is that there should be surety against any outbreak of violence, whether on the part of those who are identified with civil resistance or on the part of the general public. It would be no answer in the case of an outbreak of violence that it was instigated by the State or other agencies hostile to civil resisters.

It should be obvious that civil resistance cannot flourish in an atmosphere of violence. This does not mean that the resources of a satyagrahi have come to an end. Ways other than civil disobedience should be found out.⁹

Character of Satyagraha

That is the beauty of Satyagraha. It comes up to one-self, one has not to go out in search for it. That is a virtue inherent in the principle itself.

A *dharmayuddha*, in which there are no secrets to be guarded, no scope for cunning and no place for untruth, comes unsought; and a man of religion is ever ready for it.

A struggle which has to be previously planned is not a righteous struggle. In a righteous struggle, God Himself plans campaigns and conducts battles.

A *dharmayuddha* can be waged only in the name of God, and it is only when the Satyagrahi feels quite helpless, is apparently on his last legs and finds utter darkness all around him, that God comes to the rescue.¹⁰

In the application of Satyagraha, I discovered, in the earliest stages, that pursuit of Truth did not admit of violence being inflicted on one's opponent, but that he must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy. For, what appears to be truth to the one may appear to be error to the other. And patience means self-suffering. So the doctrine came to mean vindication of Truth, not by infliction of suffering on the opponent but one's own self.¹¹

Satyagraha and its off-shoots, non-co-operation and civil resistance, are nothing but new names for the law of suffering.¹²

With *satya* combined with *ahimsa*, you can bring the world to your feet. Satyagraha in its essence is nothing but the introduction of truth and gentleness in the political, i.e., the national, life.¹³

Satyagraha is utter self-effacement, greatest humiliation, greatest patience and brightest faith. It is its own reward.¹⁴

Satyagraha is a relentless search for truth and a determination to reach truth.¹⁵

It is a force that works silently and apparently slowly. In reality, there is no force in the world that is so direct or so swift in working.¹⁶

The word Satyagraha is often most loosely used and is made to cover veiled violence. But, as the author of the word, I may be allowed to say that it excludes every form of violence, direct or indirect, veiled or unveiled, and whether

in thought, word or deed.' It is breach of Satyagraha to wish ill to an opponent or to say a harsh word to him or of him with the intention of harming him. . . .

Satyagraha is gentle, it never wounds. It must not be the result of anger or malice. It is never fussy, never impatient, never vociferous. It is the direct opposite of compulsion. It was conceived as a complete substitute for violence.¹⁷

The fight of Satyagraha is for the strong in spirit, not the doubter or the timid. Satyagraha teaches us the art of living as well as dying. Birth and death are inevitable among mortals. What distinguishes the man from the brute is his conscious striving to realize the spirit within.¹⁸

Evolving Science

I am myself daily growing in the knowledge of Satyagraha. I have no text-book to consult in time of need, not even the Gita which I have called my dictionary. Satyagraha as conceived by me is a science in the making. It may be that what I claim to be a science may prove to be no science at all and well prove to be the musings and doings of a fool, if not a madman.

It may be that what is true in Satyagraha is as ancient as the hills. But it has not yet been acknowledged to be of any value in the solution of world problems or, rather, the one supreme problem of war. It may be that what is claimed to be new in it will prove to be really of no value in terms of that supreme problem. It may be that what are claimed to be victories of Satyagraha i.e., *ahimsa*, were really victories not of truth and non-violence but of fear of violence. These possibilities have always been in front of me. I am helpless. All I present to the nation for adoption is an answer to prayer or, which is the same thing, constantly waiting on God.¹⁹

The Technique of Satyagraha

Not to yield your soul to the conqueror means that you will refuse to do that which your conscience forbids you to do. Suppose the 'enemy' were to ask you to rub

your nose on the ground or to pull your ears or to go through such humiliating performances, you would not submit to any of these humiliations. But if he robs you of your possessions, you will yield them because, as a votary of *ahimsa*, you have from the beginning decided that earthly possessions have nothing to do with your soul. That which you look upon as your own you may keep only so long as the world allows you to own it.

Not to yield your mind means that you will not give way to any temptation. Man is oftentimes weak-minded enough to be caught in the snare of greed and honeyed words. We see this happening daily in our social life. A weak-minded man can never be a Satyagrahi. The latter's 'no' is invariably a 'no' and his 'yes' an eternal 'yes'. Such a man alone has the strength to be a devotee of truth and *ahimsa*. But here one must know the difference between steadfastness and obstinacy. If, after having said 'yes' or 'no', one finds out that the decision was wrong and in spite of that knowledge clings to it, that is obstinacy and folly. It is necessary to think things out carefully and thoroughly before coming to any decision.

The meaning of refusal to own allegiance is clear. You will not bow to the supremacy of the victor, you will not help him to attain his object. Herr Hitler has never dreamt of possessing Britain. He wants the British to admit defeat. The victor can then demand anything he likes from the vanquished, and the latter has perforce to yield. But if defeat is not admitted, the enemy will fight until he has killed his opponent. A Satyagrahi, however, is dead to his body even before the enemy attempts to kill him, i.e., he is free from attachment to his body and only lives in the victory of the soul. Therefore, when he is already thus dead, why should he yearn to kill anyone? To die in the act of killing is in essence to die defeated. Because, if the enemy is unable to get what he wants from you alive, he will decide to get it after killing you. If, on the other hand, he realizes that you have not the remotest thought in your mind of raising your hand against him even for the sake of your life, he will lack the zest

to kill you. Every hunter has had this experience. No one has ever heard of anyone hunting cows.²⁰

Power of Suffering

The hardest heart and the grossest ignorance must disappear before the rising sun of suffering without anger and without malice.²¹

Suffering has its well-defined limits. Suffering can be both wise and unwise, and when the limit is reached, to prolong it would be not unwise but the height of folly.²²

True suffering does not know itself and never calculates. It brings its own joy which surpasses all other joys.²³

The conviction has been growing upon me that things of fundamental importance to the people are not secured by reason alone, but have to be purchased with their suffering. Suffering is the law of human beings; war is the law of the jungle. But suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears, which are otherwise shut, to the voice of reason.²⁴

Code of Satyagraha

A Satyagrahi bids good-bye to fear. He is, therefore, never afraid of trusting the opponent. Even if the opponent plays him false twenty times, the Satyagrahi is ready to trust him the twenty-first time, for an implicit trust in human nature is the very essence of his creed.²⁵

A Satyagrahi is nothing if not instinctively law-abiding, and it is his law-abiding nature which exacts from him implicit obedience to the highest law, that is the voice of conscience which overrides all other laws.²⁶

Since Satyagraha is one of the most powerful methods of direct action, a Satyagrahi exhausts all other means before he resorts to Satyagraha. He will, therefore, constantly and continually approach the constituted authority, he will appeal to public opinion, educate public opinion, state his case calmly and coolly before everybody who wants to listen to him, and only after he has exhausted all these avenues will he resort to Satyagraha. But when he has found the impelling call of the inner voice within him

and launches out upon Satyagraha, he has burnt his boats and there is no receding.²⁷

The Satyagrahi, whilst he is ever ready for fight, must be equally eager for peace. He must welcome any honourable opportunity for peace.²⁸

My advice is Satyagraha first and Satyagraha last. There is no other or better road to freedom.²⁹

In the code of the Satyagrahi there is no such thing as surrender to brute force. Or the surrender then is the surrender of suffering and not to the wielder of the bayonet.³⁰

As a Satyagrahi I must always allow my cards to be examined and re-examined at all times and make reparation if an error is discovered.³¹

Qualifications of a Satyagrahi

. . . The following qualifications . . . I hold are essential for every Satyagrahi in India:

1. He must have a living faith in God, for He is his only Rock.

2. He must believe in truth and non-violence as his creed and, therefore, have faith in the inherent goodness of human nature which he expects to evoke by his truth and love expressed through his suffering.

3. He must be leading a chaste life and be ready and willing, for the sake of his cause, to give up his life and his possessions.

4. He must be a habitual Khadi-wearer and spinner. This is essential for India.

5. He must be a teetotaller and be free from the use of other intoxicants in order that his reason may be always unclouded and his mind constant.

6. He must carry out with a willing heart all the rules of discipline as may be laid down from time to time.

7. He should carry out the jail rules unless they are specially devised to hurt his self-respect.

The qualifications are not to be regarded as exhaustive. They are illustrative only.³²

A Satyagrahi may not even ascend to heaven on the wings of Satan.³³

In Satyagraha there is no place for fraud or falsehood, or any kind of untruth.³⁴

A Satyagrahi never misses, can never miss, a chance of compromise on honourable terms, it being always assumed that, in the event of failure, he is ever ready to offer battle. He needs no previous preparation, his cards are always on the table.³⁵

It is often forgotten that it is never the intention of a Satyagrahi to embarrass the wrong-doer. The appeal is never to his fear; it is, must be, always to his heart. The Satyagrahi's object is to convert, not to coerce, the wrong-doer. He should avoid artificiality in all his doings. He acts naturally and from inward conviction.³⁶

Satyagraha is essentially a weapon of the truthful. A Satyagrahi is pledged to non-violence and, unless people observe it in thought, word and deed, I cannot offer Satyagraha.³⁷

I have always held that it is only when one sees one's own mistakes with a convex lens, and does just the reverse in the case of others, that one is able to arrive at a just relative estimate of the two. I further believe that a scrupulous and conscientious observance of this rule is necessary for one who wants to be a Satyagrahi.³⁸

A Satyagrahi relies upon God for protection against the tyranny of brute force. . . .³⁹

No confirmed Satyagrahi is dismayed by the dangers, seen or unseen, from his opponent's side. What he must fear, as every army must, is the danger from within.⁴⁰

Satyagraha and Repression

Repression itself affords a training in Satyagraha, even as an unsought war affords a training for the soldier. Satyagrahis should discover the causes of repression. They

will find that repressed people are easily frightened by the slightest show of force and are unprepared for suffering and self-sacrifice. This is then the time for learning the first lessons of Satyagraha.

Those who know anything of this matchless force should teach their neighbours to bear repression not weakly and helplessly, but bravely and knowingly. . . .

And yet they [the unexciting rules of preparation] are much the most important part of Satyagraha training.

Potent and active non-violence cannot be cultivated unless the candidate goes through the necessary stages which require a lot of plodding.⁴¹

34. THE POWER OF SATYAGRAHA

Victory of Satyagraha

A CLEAR victory of Satyagraha is impossible so long as there is ill-will. But those who believe themselves to be weak are incapable of loving. Let, then, our first act every morning be to make the following resolve for the day: 'I shall not fear any one on earth. I shall fear God only; I shall not bear ill-will towards any one. I shall not submit to injustice from any one. I shall conquer untruth by truth and in resisting untruth I shall put up with all suffering.'⁴²

There is no time-limit for a Satyagrahi nor is there a limit to his capacity for suffering. Hence there is no such thing as defeat in Satyagraha.⁴³

It is not because I value life low that I countenance with joy thousands voluntarily losing their lives for Satyagraha, but because I know that it results, in the long run, in the least loss of life and, what is more, it ennobles those who lose their lives and morally enriches the world for their sacrifice.⁴⁴

And when once it is set in motion, its effect, if it is intensive enough, can overtake the whole universe. It is the greatest force because it is the highest expression of the soul.⁴⁵

My experience has taught me that a law of progression applies to every righteous struggle. But in the case of Satyagraha the law amounts to an axiom. As a Satyagraha struggle progresses onward, many another element helps to swell its current and there is a constant growth in the results to which it leads. This is really inevitable, and is bound up with the first principles of Satyagraha. For in Satyagraha the minimum is also the maximum, and as it is the irreducible minimum, there is no question of retreat, and the only movement possible is an advance. In other struggles, even when they are righteous, the demand is first pitched a little higher so as to admit of future reduction, and hence the law of progression does not apply to all of them without exception.⁴⁶

To me it is one of the most active forces in the world. It is like the sun that rises upon us unfailingly from day to day. Only if we would but understand it, it is infinitely greater than a million suns put together. It radiates life and light and peace and happiness.⁴⁷

One True Satyagrahi

If a single Satyagrahi holds out to the end, victory is certain.⁴⁸

Self-sacrifice of one innocent man is a million times more potent than the sacrifice of a million men who die in the act of killing others. The willing sacrifice of the innocent is the most powerful retort to insolent tyranny that has yet been conceived by God or man.⁴⁹

I have maintained that, even if there is one individual who is almost completely non-violent, he can put out the conflagration. . . . In this age of democracy, it is essential that desired results are achieved by the collective effort of the people. It will no doubt be good to achieve an objective through the effort of a supremely powerful indi-

vidual, but it can never make the community conscious of its corporate strength.⁵⁰

I believe in walking alone. I came alone in this world, I have walked alone in the valley of the shadow of death and I shall quit alone when the time comes. I know I am quite capable of launching Satyagraha even if I am all alone. I have done so before.⁵¹

Application of Satyagraha

It is a force that may be used by individuals as well as by communities. It may be used as well in political as in domestic affairs. Its universal applicability is a demonstration of its permanence and invincibility. It can be used alike by men, women and children.

It is totally untrue to say that it is a force to be used only by the weak so long as they are not capable of meeting violence by violence. . . .

This force is to violence and, therefore, to all tyranny, all injustice, what light is to darkness. In politics, its use is based upon the immutable maxim that government of the people is possible only so long as they consent either consciously or unconsciously to be governed.⁵²

I have never claimed to be the one original Satyagrahi. What I have claimed is the application of that doctrine on an almost universal scale, and it yet remains to be seen and demonstrated that it is a doctrine which is capable of assimilation by thousands upon thousands of peoples in all ages and climes.⁵³

The Non-violent Sanction

Satyagraha is a law of universal application. Beginning with the family, its use can be extended to every other circle.

Supposing a landowner exploits his tenants and mulcts them of the fruit of their toil by appropriating it to his own use. When they expostulate with him he does not listen and raises objections that he requires so much for his wife, so much for his children and so on. The tenants or those who have espoused their cause and have influence

will make an appeal to his wife to expostulate with her husband. She would probably say that for herself she does not need his exploited money. The children will say likewise that they would earn for themselves what they need.

Supposing further that he listens to nobody or that his wife and children combine against the tenants, they will not submit. They will quit if asked to do so, but they will make it clear that the land belongs to him who tills it. The owner cannot till all the land himself and he will have to give in to their just demands.

It may, however, be that the tenants are replaced by others. Agitation short of violence will then continue till the replacing tenants see their error and make common cause with the evicted tenants.

Thus Satyagraha is a process of educating public opinion, such that it covers all the elements of society and in the end makes itself irresistible. Violence interrupts the process and prolongs the real revolution of the whole social structure.

The conditions necessary for the success of Satyagraha are: (1) The Satyagrahi should not have any hatred in his heart against the opponent. (2) The issue must be true and substantial. (3) The Satyagrahi must be prepared to suffer till the end for his cause.⁵⁴

Training for Self-defence

I believe that every man and woman should learn the art of self-defence in this age. This is done through arms in the West. Every adult man is conscripted for army training for a definite period. The training for Satyagraha is meant for all, irrespective of age or sex. The more important part of the training here is mental, not physical. There can be no compulsion in mental training. The surrounding atmosphere no doubt acts on the mind, but that cannot justify compulsion. . . .

Satyagraha is always superior to armed resistance. This can only be effectively proved by demonstration, not by argument. It is the weapon that adorns the strong.

It can never adorn the weak. By weak is meant the weak in mind and spirit, not in body. That limitation is a quality to be prized and not a defect to be deplored.

One ought also to understand one of its other limitations. It can never be used to defend a wrong cause.

Satyagraha brigades can be organized in every village and in every block of buildings in the cities. Each brigade should be composed of those persons who are well-known to the organizers. In this respect Satyagraha differs from armed defence. For the latter the State impresses the service of everybody. For a Satyagraha brigade only those are eligible who believe in *ahimsa* and *satya*. Therefore, an intimate knowledge of the persons enlisted is necessary for the organizers.⁵⁵

Duragraha

I can see nothing but catastrophe for India from methods of violence. Workmen would be committing suicide and India would have to suffer indescribable misery if workingmen were to vent their anger by criminal disobedience of the laws of the land. . . .

When I began to preach Satyagraha and civil disobedience, it was never meant to cover criminal disobedience. My experience teaches me that truth can never be propagated by doing violence.

Those who believe in the justice of their cause need to possess boundless patience, and those alone are fit to offer civil disobedience who are above committing criminal disobedience or doing violence.

A man cannot commit both civil and criminal disobedience at the same time, even as he cannot be both temperate and furious at the same time, and just as self-restraint is acquired only after one has been able to master his passions, so is the capacity for civil disobedience acquired after one has disciplined oneself in complete and voluntary obedience of the laws of the land.

Again, just as he alone can be said to be proof against temptations who, having been exposed to them, has succeeded in resisting them, so may we be said to have

conquered anger when, having sufficient cause for it, we have succeeded in controlling ourselves.⁵⁶

Some students have revived the ancient form of barbarity in the form of 'sitting *dhurna*'. . . .I call it 'barbarity', for it is a crude way of using coercion. It is also cowardly, because one who sits *dhurna* knows that he is not going to be trampled over. It is difficult to call the practice violent, but it is certainly worse.

If we fight our opponent, we at least enable him to return the blow. But when we challenge him to walk over us, *knowing* that he will not, we place him in a most awkward and humiliating position. I know that the over-zealous students who sat *dhurna* never thought of the barbarity of the deed. But one who is expected to follow the voice of conscience and stand even single-handed in the face of odds cannot afford to be thoughtless.

There must be no impatience, no barbarity, no insolence, no undue pressure. If we want to cultivate a true spirit of democracy, we cannot afford to be intolerant. Intolerance betrays want of faith in one's cause.⁵⁷

I have not been able to understand the cause of so much excitement and disturbance that followed my detention. It is not Satyagraha. It is worse than *Duragraha*.

Those who join Satyagraha demonstrations were bound one and all to refrain at all hazard from violence, not to throw stones or in any way whatever to injure anybody. But in Bombay we have been throwing stones. We have obstructed tram-cars by putting obstacles in the way. This is not Satyagraha. We have demanded the release of about 50 men who had been arrested for deeds of violence. Our duty is chiefly to get ourselves arrested. It is breach of religious duty to endeavour to secure the release of those who have committed deeds of violence.⁵⁸

I have said times without number that Satyagraha admits of no violence, no pillage, no incendiarism; and still, in the name of Satyagraha, we have burnt buildings, forcibly captured weapons, extorted money, stopped trains, cut off telegraph wires, killed innocent people and plundered shops

and private houses. If deeds such as these could save me from the prison-house or the scaffold, I should not like to be so saved.⁵⁹

. . . Heroism and sacrifice in a bad cause are so much waste of splendid energy and hurt the good cause by drawing away attention from it by the glamour of the misused heroism and sacrifice in a bad cause.⁶⁰

. . . Indiscriminate resistance to authority must lead to lawlessness and unbridled licence and consequent self-destruction.⁶¹

35. NON-CO-OPERATION

NON-CO-OPERATION is an attempt to awaken the masses to a sense of their dignity and power. This can only be by enabling them to realize that they need not fear brute force if they would but know the soul within.⁶²

Non-co-operation is a protest against an unwitting and unwilling participation in evil. . . . Non-co-operation with evil is as much a duty as co-operation with good.⁶³

Non-co-operation is not a passive state, it is an intensively active state, more active than physical resistance or violence. Passive resistance is a misnomer. Non-co-operation in the sense used by me must be non-violent and therefore, neither punitive nor based on malice, ill-will or hatred.⁶⁴

Religious Basis

I venture to submit that the Bhagavadgītā is a gospel of non-co-operation between the forces of darkness and those of light. If it is to be literally interpreted, Arjun representing a just cause was enjoined to engage in bloody warfare with the unjust Kauravas.

Tulasidas advises the *sant* (the good) to shun the *asant* (the evil doers).

The Zend Avesta represents a perpetual duel between Ormuzd and Ahriman, between whom there is no compromise. To say of the Bible that it taboos non-co-operation is not to know Jesus, a prince among passive resisters, who uncompromisingly challenged the might of the Sadducees and the Pharisees and, for the sake of truth, did not hesitate to divide sons from their parents.

And what did the Prophet of Islam do? He non-co-operated in Mecca in a most active manner so long as his life was not in danger, and wiped the dust of Mecca off his feet when he found that he and his followers might have uselessly to perish, and fled to Medina and returned when he was strong enough to give battle to his opponents.

The duty of non-co-operation with unjust men and kings is as strictly enjoined by all the religions as is the duty of co-operation with just men and kings. Indeed, most of the scriptures of the world seem even to go beyond non-co-operation and prefer violence to effeminate submission to a wrong. The Hindu religious tradition . . . clearly proves the duty of non-co-operation. Prahlad dissociated from his father, Meerabai from her husband, Bibhishan from his brutal brother.⁶⁵

Basic Principle

The basic principle on which the practice of non-violence rests is that what holds good in respect of oneself equally applies to the whole Universe. All mankind in essence are alike. What is therefore possible for me, is possible for everybody. . . .

This in essence is the principle of non-violent non-co-operation. It follows therefore that it must have its root in love. Its object should not be to punish the opponent or to inflict injury upon him. Even while non-co-operating with him, we must make him feel that in us he has a friend and we should try to reach his heart by rendering him humanitarian service whenever possible.

In fact, it is the acid test of non-violence that in a non-violent conflict there is no rancour left behind and, in the end, the enemies are converted into friends. That was my

experience in South Africa with General Smuts. He started with being my bitterest opponent and critic. Today he is my warmest friend. . . .

Enduring Quality

Times change and systems decay. But it is my faith that, in the result, it is only non-violence and things that are based on non-violence that will endure. Nineteen hundred years ago Christianity was born. The ministry of Jesus lasted for only three brief years. His teaching was misunderstood even during his own time and today Christianity is a denial of his central teaching[: "Love your enemy." But what are nineteen hundred years for the spread of the central doctrine of a man's teaching?]

Six centuries rolled by and Islam appeared on the scene. Many Musalmans will not even allow me to say that Islam, as the word implies, is unadulterated peace. My reading of the Koran has convinced me that the basis of Islam is not violence.

But, here again, thirteen hundred years are but a speck in the cycle of Time. I am convinced that both these great faiths will live only to the extent that their followers imbibe the central teaching of non-violence. But it is not a thing to be grasped through mere intellect, it must sink into our hearts.⁶⁶

Although non-co-operation is one of the main weapons in the armoury of Satyagraha, it should not be forgotten that it is after all only a means to secure the co-operation of the opponent consistently with truth and justice. The essence of non-violent technique is that it seeks to liquidate antagonisms but not the antagonists themselves. In non-violent fight you have, to a certain measure, to conform to the tradition and conventions of the system you are pitted against. Avoidance of all relationship with the opposing power, therefore, can never be a Satyagrahi's object, but transformation or purification of that relationship.⁶⁷

Ethics of Non-co-operation

I consider non-co-operation to be such a powerful and pure instrument that, if it is enforced in an earnest spirit,

it will be like seeking first the Kingdom of God and everything else following as a matter of course. People will then have realized their true power. They would have learnt the value of discipline, self-control, joint action, non-violence, organization and everything else that goes to make a nation great and good, and not merely great.⁶⁸

There is no instrument so clean, so harmless and yet so effective as non-co-operation. Judiciously handled, it need not produce any evil consequences. And its intensity will depend purely on the capacity of the people for sacrifice.⁶⁹

We had lost the power of saying 'no'. It had become disloyal, almost sacrilegious to say 'no' to the Government. This deliberate refusal to co-operate is like the necessary weeding process that a cultivator has to resort to before he sows. Weeding is as necessary to agriculture as sowing. Indeed, even whilst the crops are growing, the weeding fork, as every husbandman knows, is an instrument almost of daily use.

The nation's non-co-operation is an invitation to the Government to co-operate with it on its own terms, as is every nation's right and every good government's duty. Non-co-operation is the nation's notice that it is no longer satisfied to be in tutelage.⁷⁰

The movement of non-violent non-co-operation has nothing in common with the historical struggles for freedom in the West. It is not based on brute force or hatred. It does not aim at destroying the tyrant. It is a movement of self-purification. It therefore seeks to convert the tyrant. It may fail because India was not ready for mass non-violence. But it would be wrong to judge the movement by false standards. My own opinion is that the movement has in no wise failed. It has found an abiding place in India's struggle for freedom.⁷¹

A Duty

At times non-co-operation becomes as much a duty as co-operation. No one is bound to co-operate in one's

own undoing or slavery. Freedom received through the effort of others, however benevolent, cannot be retained when such effort is withdrawn. In other words, such freedom is not real freedom. But the lowliest can feel its glow as soon as they learn the art of attaining it through non-violent non-co-operation. . . .

I am quite sure that non-violent non-co-operation can secure what violence never can, and this by ultimate conversion of the wrong-doers. We in India have never given non-violence the trial it has deserved. The marvel is that we have attained so much even with our mixed non-violence.⁷²

I have presented non-co-operation in terms of religion, because I enter politics only in so far as it develops the religious faculty in me.⁷³

Behind my non-co-operation there is always the keenest desire to co-operate on the slightest pretext even with the worst of opponents. To me, a very imperfect mortal, ever in need of God's grace, no one is beyond redemption.⁷⁴

. . . Nothing crooked will have countenance from me. For me, the law of Satyagraha, the law of love, is an eternal principle. I co-operate with all that is good. I desire to non-co-operate with all that is evil. . . .⁷⁵

No Hatred

By a long course of prayerful discipline, I have ceased for over forty years to hate anybody. I know that this is a big claim. Nevertheless, I make it in all humility. But I can and I do hate evil wherever it exists.

My non-co-operation has its root not in hatred, but in love. My personal religion peremptorily forbids me to hate anybody. I learnt this simple yet grand doctrine when I was twelve years old through a school book, and the conviction has persisted up to now. It is daily growing on me. It is a burning passion with me.⁷⁶

It is not that I harbour disloyalty towards anything whatsoever, but I do so against all untruth, all that is unjust, all that is evil. . . . I remain loyal to an institution so long as that institution conduces to my growth, to the

growth of the nation. Immediately I find that the institution, instead of conducing to its growth, impedes it, I hold it to be my bounden duty to be disloyal to it.⁷⁷

My non-co-operation, though it is part of my creed, is a prelude to co-operation. My non-co-operation is with methods and systems, never with men. I may not harbour ill-will even against a Dyer. I regard ill-will as beneath the dignity of man.⁷⁸

Some have called me the greatest revolutionary of my time. It may be false, but I believe myself to be a revolutionary, a non-violent revolutionary. My means are non-co-operation. No person can amass wealth without the co-operation, willing or forced, of the people concerned.⁷⁹

I am by instinct a co-operator; my very non-co-operation is intended to purge co-operation of all meanness and falsity, for I hold such co-operation is not worth the name.⁸⁰

36. FASTING AND SATYAGRAHA

Weapon of Satyagraha

FASTING is a potent weapon in the Satyagraha armoury. It cannot be taken by every one. Mere physical capacity to take it is no qualification for it. It is of no use without a living faith in God. It should never be a mechanical effort or a mere imitation. It must come from the depth of one's soul. It is, therefore, always rare.⁸¹

There can be no room for selfishness, anger, lack of faith, or impatience in a pure fast. . . . Infinite patience, firm resolve, single-mindedness of purpose, perfect calm, and no anger must of necessity be there. But since it is impossible for a person to develop all these qualities all at once, no one who has not devoted himself to following the laws of *ahimsa* should undertake a Satyagrahi fast.⁸²

[Fasting] is . . . fierce and not altogether free from danger. I myself have before condemned fasting when it seemed to me to be wrong or morally unjustified. But to

shirk a fast where there is a clear moral indication is a dereliction of duty. Such a fast has to be based on unadulterated truth and *ahimsa*.⁸³

Fasting unto Death

Fasting unto death is the last and the most potent weapon in the armoury of Satyagraha. It is a sacred thing. But it must be accepted with all its implications. It is not the fast itself, but what it implies that matters.⁸⁴

Fasting and the Way of Christ

Fasting cannot be undertaken mechanically. It is a powerful thing but a dangerous thing, if handled amateurishly. It requires complete self-purification, much more than what is required in facing death with retaliation even in mind. One such act of perfect sacrifice would suffice for the whole world. Such is held to be Jesus' example.⁸⁵

Of course, it is not to be denied that fasts can be really coercive. Such are fasts to attain a selfish object. A fast undertaken to wring money from a person or for fulfilling some such personal end would amount to the exercise of coercion or undue influence. I would unhesitatingly advocate resistance of such undue influence. I have myself successfully resisted it in the fasts that have been undertaken or threatened against me.

And if it is argued that the dividing line between a selfish and unselfish end is often very thin, I would urge that a person who regards the end of a fast to be selfish or otherwise base should resolutely refuse to yield to it, even though the refusal may result in the death of the fasting person.

If people will cultivate the habit of disregarding fasts which, in their opinion, are taken for unworthy ends, such fasts will be robbed of the taint of coercion and undue influence. Like all human institutions, fasting can be both legitimately and illegitimately used.⁸⁶

If a man, however popular and great he may be, takes up an improper cause and fasts in defence of the impropriety, it is the duty of his friends (among whom I

count myself), fellow-workers and relatives to let him die rather than that an improper cause should triumph so that he may live. Fairest means cease to be fair when the end sought is unfair.⁸⁷

Last Resort

One general principle, however, I would like to enunciate. A Satyagrahi should fast only as a last resort when all other avenues of redress have been explored and have failed. There is no room for imitation in fasts. He who has no inner strength should not dream of it, and never with attachment to success.

But if a Satyagrahi once undertakes a fast from conviction, he must stick to his resolve whether there is a chance of his action bearing fruit or not. This does not mean that fasting cannot or can bear fruit. He who fasts in the expectation of fruit generally fails. And even if he does not seemingly fail, he loses all the inner joy which a true fast holds. . . .

Ridiculous fasts spread like plague and are harmful. But, when fasting becomes a duty, it cannot be given up. Therefore, I do fast when I consider it to be necessary and cannot abstain from it on any score. What I do myself I cannot prevent others from doing under similar circumstances. It is common knowledge that the best of good things are often abused. We see this happening every day.⁸⁸

. . . When human ingenuity fails, the votary fasts. This fasting quickens the spirit of prayer, that is to say, the fasting is a spiritual act, and therefore, addressed to God. The effect of such action on the life of the people is that, where the person fasting is at all known to them, their sleeping conscience is awakened.

But there is the danger that the people through mistaken sympathy may act against their will in order to save the life of the loved one. This danger has got to be faced. One ought not to be deterred from right action when one is sure of the rightness. It can best promote circumspection. Such a fast is undertaken in obedience to the dictates of the inner voice and, therefore, prevents haste.⁸⁹

VII: NON-POSSESSION

37. THE GOSPEL OF NON-POSSESSION

Key to Service

WHEN I found myself drawn into the political coil, I asked myself what was necessary for me in order to remain absolutely untouched by immorality, by untruth, by what is known as political gain . . . it was a difficult struggle in the beginning and it was a wrestle with my wife and—as I can vividly recall—with my children also. But be that as it may, I came definitely to the conclusion that, if I had to serve the people in whose midst my life was cast and of whose difficulties I was a witness from day to day, I must discard all wealth, all possession. . . .

I cannot tell you with truth that, when this belief came to me, I discarded everything immediately. I must confess to you that progress at first was slow. And now, as I recall those days of struggle, I remember that it was also painful in the beginning. But, as days went by, I saw that I had to throw overboard many other things which I used to consider as mine, and a time came when it became a matter of positive joy to give up those things. And one after another, then, by almost geometric progression, the things slipped away from me.

And, as I am describing my experiences, I can say a great burden fell off my shoulders, and I felt that I could now walk with ease and do my work also in the service of my fellow-men with great comfort and still greater joy. The possession of anything then became a troublesome thing and a burden.

Exploring the cause of that joy, I found that, if I kept anything as my own, I had to defend it against the whole world. I found also that there were many people who did not have the thing, although they wanted it; and I would have to seek police assistance also if hungry, famine-stricken

people, finding me in a lonely place, wanted not merely to divide the thing with me but to dispossess me. And I said to myself, if they want it and would take it, they do so not from any malicious motive, but they would do it because theirs was a greater need than mine.¹

It is open to the world . . . to laugh at my dispossessing myself of all property. For me the dispossession has been a positive gain. I would like people to compete with me in my contentment. It is the richest treasure I own. Hence it is perhaps right to say that, though I preach poverty, I am a rich man!²

Voluntary Self-denial

Our civilization, our culture, our Swaraj depend not upon multiplying our wants—self-indulgence, but upon restricting our wants—self-denial.³

Non-possession is allied to non-stealing. A thing not originally stolen must nevertheless be classified as stolen property, if we possess it without needing it. Possession implies provision for the future. A seeker after Truth, a follower of the law of Love, cannot hold anything against tomorrow. God never stores for the morrow. He never creates more than what is strictly needed for the moment. If, therefore, we repose faith in His Providence, we should rest assured that He will give us every day our daily bread, meaning everything that we require. . . .

Our ignorance or negligence of the Divine Law, which gives to man from day to day his daily bread and no more, has given rise to inequalities with all the miseries attendant upon them. The rich have a superfluous store of things which they do not need and which are, therefore, neglected and wasted, while millions are starved to death for want of sustenance.

If each retained possession of only what he needed, no one would be in want, and all would live in contentment. As it is, the rich are discontented no less than the poor. The poor man would fain become a millionaire, and the millionaire a multi-millionaire.

The rich should take the initiative in dispossession with a view to a universal diffusion of the spirit of contentment. If only they keep their own property within moderate limits, the starving will be easily fed, and will learn the lesson of contentment along with the rich.

Perfect fulfilment of the ideal of non-possession requires that man should, like the birds, have no roof over his head, no clothing and no stock of food for the morrow. He will indeed need his daily bread, but it will be God's business, and not his, to provide it. Only the fewest possible, if any at all, can reach this ideal. We ordinary seekers may not be repelled by the seeming impossibility. But we must keep the ideal constantly in view, and in the light thereof, critically examine our possessions and try to reduce them.

Civilization, in the real sense of the term, consists not in the multiplication, but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and contentment, and increases the capacity for service.

From the standpoint of pure truth, the body too is a possession. It has been truly said that desire for enjoyment creates bodies for the soul. When this desire vanishes, there remains no further need for the body, and man is free from the vicious cycle of births and deaths. The soul is omnipresent; why should she care to be confined within the cage-like body, or do evil and even kill for the sake of that cage?

Ideal of Renunciation

We thus arrive at the ideal of total renunciation, and learn to use the body for the purposes of service so long as it exists, so much so that service and not bread becomes with us the staff of life. We eat and drink, sleep and wake for service alone. Such an attitude of mind brings us real happiness, and the beatific vision in the fulness of time. Let us all examine ourselves from this standpoint.

We should remember that non-possession is a principle applicable to thoughts as well as to things. A man who fills

his brain with useless knowledge violates that inestimable principle. Thoughts, which turn us away from God, or do not turn us towards Him, constitute impediments in our way.

In this connection we may consider the definition of knowledge contained in the 13th Chapter of the Gita. We are there told that humility (*amanitvam*), etc., constitute knowledge, and all the rest is ignorance. If this is true—and there is no doubt that it is true—much that we hug today as knowledge is ignorance pure and simple, and therefore only does us harm instead of conferring any benefit. It makes the mind wander, and even reduces it to a vacuity, and discontent flourishes in endless ramifications of evil.

Needless to say, this is not a plea for inertia. Every moment of our life should be filled with mental or physical activity, but that activity should be *sattvika*, tending to truth. One who has consecrated his life to service cannot be idle for a single moment. But we have to learn to distinguish between good activity and evil activity. This discernment goes naturally with a single-minded devotion to service.⁴

Moral Purpose

Why should all of us possess property? Why should not we, after a certain time, dispossess ourselves of all property? Unscrupulous merchants do this for dishonest purposes. Why may we not do it for a moral and a great purpose?

For a Hindu it was the usual thing at a certain stage. Every good Hindu is expected, after having lived the household life for a certain period, to enter upon a life of non-possession of property. Why may we not revive the noble tradition? In effect it merely amounts to this that for maintenance we place ourselves at the mercy of those to whom we transfer our property. To me the idea is attractive. In the innumerable cases of such honourable trust there is hardly one case in a million of abuse of trust.

. . . How such a practice can be worked without giving handle to dishonest persons can only be determined after long

experimenting. No one, however, need be deterred from trying the experiment for fear of the example being abused. The divine author of the Gita was not deterred from delivering the message of the 'Song Celestial' although he probably knew that it would be tortured to justify every variety of vice including murder.⁵

The highest fulfilment of religion . . . requires a giving up of all possession. Having ascertained the law of our being, we must set about reducing it to practice to the extent of our capacity and no further. That is the middle way.⁶

Golden Rule

The golden rule . . . is resolutely to refuse to have what the millions cannot. This ability to refuse will not descend upon us all of a sudden. The first thing is to cultivate the mental attitude that will not have possessions or facilities denied to millions, and the next immediate thing is to re-arrange our lives as fast as possible in accordance with that mentality.⁷

Love and exclusive possession can never go together. Theoretically, where there is perfect love, there must be perfect non-possession. The body is our last possession. So, a man can only exercise perfect love and be completely dispossessed if he is prepared to embrace death and renounce his body for the sake of human service.

But that is true in theory only. In actual life we can hardly exercise perfect love, for the body as a possession will always remain imperfect and it will always be his part to try to be perfect. So that perfection in love or non-possession will remain an unattainable ideal as long as we are alive, but towards which we must ceaselessly strive.⁸

Jesus, Mahomed, Buddha, Nanak, Kabir, Chaitanya, Shankara, Dayanand, Ramakrishna were men who exercised an immense influence over and moulded the character of thousands of men. The world is the richer for their having lived in it. And they were all men who deliberately embraced poverty as their lot. . . . In so far as we have

made the modern materialistic craze our goal, so far are we going downhill in the path of progress.⁹

How heavy is the toll of sins and wrongs that wealth, power and prestige exact from man!¹⁰

To take something from another without his permission is theft of course. But it is also theft to use a thing for a purpose different from the one intended by the lender or to use it for a period longer than that which has been fixed with him. The profound truth upon which this observance is based is that God never creates more than what is strictly needed for the moment. Therefore, whoever appropriates more than the minimum that is really necessary for him is guilty of theft.¹¹

Secret of Life

Renounce all and dedicate it to God and then live. The right of living is thus derived from renunciation. It does not say, 'When all do their part of the work, I too will do it.' It says, 'Don't bother about others, do your job first and leave the rest to Him.'¹²

You may have occasion to possess or use material things, but the secret of life lies in never missing them.¹³

The secret of happy life lies in renunciation. Renunciation is life. Indulgence spells death. Therefore, everyone has a right and should desire to live 125 years *while performing service without an eye on result*. Such life must be wholly and solely dedicated to service. Renunciation made for the sake of such service is an ineffable joy of which none can deprive one, because that nectar springs from within and sustains life. In this there can be no room for worry or impatience. Without this joy, long life is impossible and would not be worth while even if possible.¹⁴

This does not mean that, if one has wealth, it should be thrown away and wife and children should be turned out of doors. It simply means that one must give up attachment to these things and dedicate one's all to God and make use of His gifts to serve Him only.¹⁵

38. POVERTY AND RICHES

Avoidance of Strife

I cannot picture to myself a time when no man shall be richer than another. But I do picture to myself a time when the rich will spurn to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor and the poor will cease to envy the rich. Even in a most perfect world, we shall fail to avoid inequalities, but we can and must avoid strife and bitterness.¹⁶

I have heard many of our countrymen say that we will gain American wealth, but avoid its methods. I venture to suggest that such an attempt, if it were made, is foredoomed to failure. We cannot be 'wise, temperate and furious' in a moment.¹⁷

Every palace that one sees in India is a demonstration, not of her riches, but of the insolence of power that riches give to the few, who owe them to the miserably requited labours of the millions of the paupers of India.¹⁸

Duty of the Rich

The rich should ponder well as to what their duty is today. They who employ mercenaries to guard their wealth may find those very guardians turning on them. The moneyed classes have got to learn how to fight either with arms or with the weapon of non-violence.

For those who wish to follow the latter way, the best and most effective *mantra* is: तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः। (Enjoy thy wealth by renouncing it). Expanded it means: "Earn your crores by all means. But understand that your wealth is not yours; it belongs to the people. Take what you require for your legitimate needs, and use the remainder for society."

This truth has hitherto not been acted upon; but, if the moneyed classes do not even act on it in these times of stress, they will remain the slaves of their riches and passions and, consequently, of those who overpower them.

. . . I see coming the day of the rule of the poor, whether that rule be through force of arms or of non-violence. Let it be remembered that physical force is transitory even as the body is transitory. But the power of the spirit is permanent, even as the spirit is everlasting.¹⁹

I have no hesitation in endorsing the opinion that generally rich men and, for that matter, most men are not particular as to the way they make money. In the application of the method of non-violence, one must believe in the possibility of every person, however depraved, being reformed under humane and skilled treatment. We must appeal to the good in human beings and expect response.

Good of All

Is it not conducive to the well-being of society that every member uses all his talents, only not for personal aggrandizement but for the good of all? We do not want to produce a dead equality where every person becomes or is rendered incapable of using his ability to the utmost possible extent. Such a society must ultimately perish.

I therefore suggest that my advice, that moneyed men may earn their crores (honestly only, of course) but so as to dedicate them to the service of all, is perfectly sound. “तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः” is a *mantra* based on uncommon knowledge. It is the surest method to evolve a new order of life of universal benefit in the place of the present one where each one lives for himself without regard to what happens to his neighbour.²⁰

Beggary

The grinding poverty and starvation with which our country is afflicted is such that it drives more and more every year into the ranks of the beggars, whose desperate struggle for bread renders them insensible to all feelings of decency and self-respect. And our philanthropists, instead of providing work for them and insisting on their working for bread, give them alms.²¹

My *ahimsa* would not tolerate the idea of giving a free meal to a healthy person who has not worked for it in some honest way, and if I had the power, I would stop

every *Sadavrat* where free meals are given. It has degraded the nation and has encouraged laziness, idleness, hypocrisy and even crime. Such misplaced charity adds nothing to the wealth of the country, whether material or spiritual, and gives a false sense of meritoriousness to the donor.

Work, Not Charity

How nice and wise it would be if the donors were to open institutions where they would give meals under healthy, clean surroundings to men and women who would work for them. I personally think that the spinning wheel or any of the processes that cotton has to go through will be an ideal occupation. But if they will not have that, they may choose any other work; only the rule should be, "No labour, no meal." . . .

I know that it is easier to fling free meals in the faces of idlers, but much more difficult to organize an institution where honest work has to be done before meals are served. From a pecuniary standpoint, in the initial stages at any rate, the cost of feeding people after taking work from them will be more than the cost of the present free kitchen. But I am convinced that it will be cheaper in the long run, if we do not want to increase in geometrical progression the race of loafers which is fast over-running this land.²²

To a people famishing and idle, the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages.²³

I must refuse to insult the naked by giving them clothes they do not need, instead of giving them work which they sorely need. I will not commit the sin of becoming their patron but, on learning that I had assisted in impoverishing them, I would give them neither crumbs nor cast off clothing, but the best of my food and clothes and associate myself with them in work.²⁴

I do feel that, whilst it is bad to encourage begging, I will not send away a beggar without offering him work and food. If he will not work, I should let him go without food. Those who are physically disabled like the halt and the maimed have got to be supported by the State.

There is, however, a lot of fraud going on under cover of pretended blindness or even genuine blindness. So many blind have become rich because of ill-gotten gains. It would be a good thing if they were taken to an asylum, rather than be exposed to this temptation.²⁵

Dependence on Servants

I hold that a man who desires the co-operation of and wishes to co-operate with others should not be dependent on servants. If anyone has to have one at a time of scarcity of servants, he will have to pay what is demanded and accept all other conditions with the result that he will, instead of being master, become the servant of his employee. This is good for neither the master nor the servant.

But if what an individual seeks is not slavery, but the co-operation of a fellow-being, he will not only serve himself but also him whose co-operation he needs. Through the extension of this principle, a man's family will become co-terminous with the world and his attitude towards his fellow-beings will also undergo a corresponding change. There is no other way of reaching the desired consummation.²⁶

39. DARIDRANARAYAN

God of the Poor

DARIDRANARAYAN is one of the millions of names by which humanity knows God who is unnameable and unfathomable by human understanding, and it means God of the poor, God appearing in the hearts of the poor.²⁷

For the poor the economic is the spiritual. You cannot make any other appeal to those starving millions. It will fall flat on them. But you take food to them and they will regard you as their God. They are incapable of any other thought.²⁸

With this very hand I have collected soiled pies from them, tied tightly in their rags. Talk to them of modern progress. Insult them by taking the name of God before them in vain. They will call you and me fiends if we talk about God to them. They know, if they know any God at all, a God of terror, vengeance, a pitiless tyrant.²⁹

I am working for winning Swaraj . . . for those toiling and unemployed millions who do not get even a square meal a day and have to scratch along with a piece of stale *roti* and a pinch of salt.³⁰

Message of God

I dare not take before them the message of God. I may as well place before the dog over there the message of God as before those hungry millions, who have no lustre in their eyes and whose only God is their bread. I can take before them a message of God only by taking the message of sacred work before them.

It is good enough to talk of God whilst we are sitting here after a nice breakfast and looking forward to a nicer luncheon, but how am I to talk of God to the millions who have to go without two meals a day? To them God can only appear as bread and butter. Well, the peasants of India were getting their bread from their soil. I offered them the spinning wheel in order that they may get butter and, if I appear today . . . in my loin-cloth, it is because I come as the sole representative of those half-starved, half-naked dumb millions.³¹

I claim to know my millions. All the 24 hours of the day I am with them. They are my first care and last because I recognize no God except that God that is to be found in the hearts of the dumb millions. They do not recognize His presence; I do. And I worship the God that is Truth or Truth which is God through the service of these millions.³²

VIII: LABOUR

40. THE GOSPEL OF BREAD LABOUR

Divine Law

GOD CREATED man to work for his food, and said that those who ate without work were thieves.¹

The great Nature has intended us to earn our bread in the sweat of our brow. Every one, therefore, who idles away a single minute becomes to that extent a burden upon his neighbours, and to do so is to commit a breach of the very first lesson of *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* is nothing if not a well-balanced, exquisite consideration for one's neighbour, and an idle man is wanting in that elementary consideration.²

The law, that to live man must work, first came home to me upon reading Tolstoy's writing on bread labour. But, even before that I had begun to pay homage to it after reading Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. The divine law, that man must earn his bread by labouring with his own hands, was first stressed by a Russian writer named T. M. Bondaref. Tolstoy advertised it and gave it wider publicity. In my view, the same principle has been set forth in the third chapter of the Gita where we are told that he who eats without offering sacrifice eats stolen food. Sacrifice here can only mean bread labour.³

Rule of Reason

Reason too leads to an identical conclusion. How can a man who does not do body labour have the right to eat? 'In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread', says the Bible. A millionaire cannot carry on for long, and will soon get tired of his life, if he rolls in his bed all day long, and is even helped to his food. He, therefore, induces hunger by exercise and helps himself to the food he eats.

If every one, whether rich or poor, has thus to take exercise in some shape or form, why should it not assume the form of productive, i.e., bread labour? No one asks the cultivator to take breathing exercise or to work his muscles. And more than nine-tenths of humanity lives by tilling the soil. How much happier, healthier and more peaceful would the world become if the remaining tenth followed the example of the overwhelming majority, at least to the extent of labouring enough for their food!

Social Revolution

. . . There is a world-wide conflict between capital and labour, and the poor envy the rich. If all worked for their bread, distinctions of rank would be obliterated; the rich would still be there, but they would deem themselves only trustees of their property, and would use it mainly in the public interest.⁴

God never creates more than what is strictly needed for the moment, with the result that if any one appropriates more than he really needs, he reduces his neighbour to destitution. The starvation of people in several parts of the world is due to many of us seizing very much more than they need. We may utilize the gifts of nature just as we choose, but in her books the debits are always equal to the credits. There is no balance in either column.⁵

Every man has an equal right to the necessities of life even as birds and beasts have. And since every right carries with it a corresponding duty and the corresponding remedy for resisting any attack upon it, it is merely a matter of finding out the corresponding duties and remedies to vindicate the elementary fundamental equality. The corresponding duty is to labour with my limbs and the corresponding remedy is to non-co-operate with him who deprives me of the fruit of my labour.⁶

True Service

Intelligent bread labour is any day the highest form of social service. For what can be better than that a man should by his personal labour add to the useful wealth of the country? 'Being' is 'doing'.

The adjective 'intelligent' has been prefixed to labour in order to show that labour to be social service must have that definite purpose behind it. Otherwise every labourer can be said to render social service. He does in a way, but what is meant here is something much more than that. A person who labours for the general good of all serves society and is worthy of his hire. Therefore, such bread labour is not different from social service.⁷

Obedience to the law of bread labour will bring about a silent revolution in the structure of society. Men's triumph will consist in substituting the struggle for existence by the struggle for mutual service. The law of the brute will be replaced by the law of man.⁸

If everybody lives by the sweat of his brow, the earth will become a paradise. The question of the use of special talents hardly needs separate consideration. If everyone labours physically for his bread, it follows that poets, doctors, lawyers, etc., will regard it their duty to use those talents gratis for the service of humanity. Their output will be all the better and richer for their selfless devotion to duty.⁹

Field of Application

Bread labour is a veritable blessing to one who would observe non-violence, worship Truth and make the observance of *brahmacharya* a natural act. This labour can truly be related to agriculture alone. But at present at any rate, everybody is not in a position to take to it. A person can therefore spin or weave, or take up carpentry or smithery, instead of tilling the soil, always regarding agriculture, however, to be the ideal.

Every one must be his own scavenger. Evacuation is as necessary as eating; and the best thing would be for every one to dispose of his own waste. If this is impossible, each family should see to its own scavenging.

I have felt for years that there must be something radically wrong where scavenging has been made the concern of a separate class in society. We have no historical record of the man who first assigned the lowest status to this

essential sanitary service. Whoever he was, he by no means did us a good.

We should, from our very childhood, have the idea impressed upon our minds that we are all scavengers, and the easiest way of doing so is for every one who has realized this to commence bread labour as a scavenger. Scavenging, thus intelligently taken up, will help to a true appreciation of the equality of man.¹⁰

Voluntary Recognition

Return to the villages means a definite, voluntary recognition of the duty of bread labour and all it connotes. But says the critic, "Millions of India's children are today living in the villages and yet they are living a life of semi-starvation." This, alas, is but too true. Fortunately, we know that theirs is not voluntary obedience. They would perhaps shirk body labour if they could, and even rush to the nearest city if they could be accommodated in it.

Compulsory obedience to a master is a state of slavery, willing obedience to one's father is the glory of sonship. Similarly, compulsory obedience to the law of bread labour breeds poverty, disease and discontent. It is a state of slavery. Willing obedience to it must bring contentment and health. And it is health which is real wealth, not pieces of silver and gold.¹¹

Division of Labour

I believe in the division of labour or work. But I do insist on equality of wages. The lawyer, the doctor or the teacher is entitled to no more than the *bhangi*. Then only will division of work uplift the nation or the earth. There is no other royal road to true civilization or happiness.¹²

The economics of bread labour are the living way of life. It means that every man has to labour with his body for his food and clothing. If I can convince the people of the value and necessity of bread labour, there never will be any want of bread and cloth. I shall have no hesitation in saying to the people with confidence that they

must starve and go naked if they will neither work on the land nor spin and weave.¹³

I adhere to what I had said in 1925, viz., that all adults above a certain age, male or female, who would contribute some body-labour to the State would be entitled to the vote.¹⁴

Work as Worship

I cannot imagine anything nobler or more national than that for, say, one hour in the day, we should all do the labour that the poor must do, and thus identify ourselves with them and through them with all mankind. I cannot imagine better worship of God than that in His name I should labour for the poor even as they do.¹⁵

No work that is done in His name and dedicated to Him is small. All work when so done assumes equal merit. A scavenger who works in His service shares equal distinction with a king who uses his gifts in His name and as a mere trustee.¹⁶

. . . Service is not possible unless it is rooted in love or *ahimsa*. . . . True love is boundless like the ocean and, rising and swelling within one, spreads itself out and crossing all boundaries and frontiers, envelops the whole world. This service is again impossible without bread labour, otherwise described in the Gita as *Yajna*. It is only when a man or woman has done bodily labour for the sake of service that he or she has the right to live.¹⁷

Duty of Sacrifice

“Brahma created His people, with the duty of sacrifice laid upon them, and said: ‘By this do you flourish. Let it be the fulfiller of all your desires.’ He who eats without performing this sacrifice, eats stolen bread,”—thus says the Gita. “Earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow,” says the Bible. Sacrifices may be of many kinds. One of them may well be bread labour. If all laboured for their bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. Then there would be no cry of over-population, no disease, and no such misery as we see around.

Such labour will be the highest form of sacrifice. Men will no doubt do many other things, either through their bodies or through their minds, but all this will be labour of love, for the common good. There will then be no rich and no poor, none high and none low, no touchable and no untouchable.

This may be an unattainable ideal. But we need not, therefore, cease to strive for it. Even if, without fulfilling the whole law of sacrifice, that is, the law of our being, we perform physical labour enough for our daily bread, we should go a long way towards the ideal.

If we did so, our wants would be minimized, our food would be simple. We should then eat to live, not live to eat. Let anyone who doubts the accuracy of this proposition try to sweat for his bread, he will derive the greatest relish from the productions of his labour, improve his health and discover that many things he took were superfluities.¹⁸

Gospel of Work

There can never be too much emphasis placed on work. I am simply repeating the gospel taught by the Gita, where the Lord says: 'If I did not remain ever at work sleeplessly, I should set a wrong example to mankind.'

. . . If I had the good fortune to be face to face with one like him [the Buddha], I should not hesitate to ask him why he did not teach the gospel of work, in preference to one of contemplation. I should do the same thing if I were to meet . . . these saints (like Tukaram and Dnyandev, etc.).¹⁹

God created man to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, and I dread the prospect of our being able to produce all that we want, including our food-stuffs, out of a conjuror's hat.²⁰

We should be ashamed of resting, or having a square meal, so long as there is one able-bodied man or woman without work or food.²¹

I have indeed wept to see the stark poverty and unemployment in our country, but I must confess our own negligence and ignorance are largely responsible for it. We do not know the dignity of labour as such. Thus, a shoemaker will not do anything beyond making his shoes, he will think that all other labour is below his dignity. That wrong notion must go.

There is enough employment in India for all who will work with their hands and feet honestly. God has given everyone the capacity to work and earn more than his daily bread, and whoever is ready to use that capacity is sure to find work. No labour is too mean for one who wants to earn an honest penny. The only thing is the readiness to use the hands and feet that God has given us.²²

. . . It is surely the duty of a Government to ensure bread labour for all unemployed men and women, no matter how many they are.²³

Intellectual Labour

Let me not be misunderstood. I do not discount the value of intellectual labour, but no amount of it is any compensation for bodily labour which every one of us is born to give for the common good of all. It may be, often is, infinitely superior to bodily labour, but it never is or can be a substitute for it, even as intellectual food, though far superior to the grains we eat, never can be a substitute for them. Indeed, without the products of the earth, those of the intellect would be an impossibility.²⁴

May not men earn their bread by intellectual labour? No. The needs of the body must be supplied by the body. "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's" perhaps applies here well. Mere mental, that is, intellectual labour is for the soul and is its own satisfaction. It should never demand payment. In the ideal state, doctors, lawyers and the like will work solely for the benefit of society, not for self.²⁵

Intellectual work is important and has an undoubted place in the scheme of life. But what I insist on is the neces-

Such labour will be the highest form of sacrifice. Men will no doubt do many other things, either through their bodies or through their minds, but all this will be labour of love, for the common good. There will then be no rich and no poor, none high and none low, no touchable and no untouchable.

This may be an unattainable ideal. But we need not, therefore, cease to strive for it. Even if, without fulfilling the whole law of sacrifice, that is, the law of our being, we perform physical labour enough for our daily bread, we should go a long way towards the ideal.

If we did so, our wants would be minimized, our food would be simple. We should then eat to live, not live to eat. Let anyone who doubts the accuracy of this proposition try to sweat for his bread, he will derive the greatest relish from the productions of his labour, improve his health and discover that many things he took were superfluities.¹⁸

Gospel of Work

There can never be too much emphasis placed on work. I am simply repeating the gospel taught by the Gita, where the Lord says: 'If I did not remain ever at work sleeplessly, I should set a wrong example to mankind.'

. . . If I had the good fortune to be face to face with one like him [the Buddha], I should not hesitate to ask him why he did not teach the gospel of work, in preference to one of contemplation. I should do the same thing if I were to meet . . . these saints (like Tukaram and Dnyandev, etc.).¹⁹

God created man to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, and I dread the prospect of our being able to produce all that we want, including our food-stuffs, out of a conjuror's hat.²⁰

We should be ashamed of resting, or having a square meal, so long as there is one able-bodied man or woman without work or food.²¹

the exploiters also. I have even suggested that ultimately it will lead to both being equal partners. Capital as such is not evil; it is the wrong use that is evil. Capital in some form or other will always be needed.³¹

Labour's Duties, Rights

It is my universal experience that, as a rule, labour discharges its obligations more effectively and more conscientiously than the master who has corresponding obligations towards the labourers. It, therefore, becomes necessary for labour to find out how far labour can impose its will on the masters.

If we find that we are not adequately paid or housed, how are we to receive enough wages, and good accommodation? Who is to determine the standard of comfort required by the labourers? The best way, no doubt, is that you labourers understand your own rights, understand the method of enforcing your rights and enforce them. But for that you require a little previous training . . . education.³²

But there is no right in the world that does not presuppose a duty. An owner never spoils his property. When you know that the mill is as much yours as of the mill-owners, you will never damage your property. You will never angrily destroy cloth or machinery with a view to squaring your quarrel with the mill-owners.

Fight, if you must, on the path of righteousness and God will be with you. There is no royal road, I repeat, to gaining your rights, except self-purification and suffering.³³

Labour's Power

In my humble opinion, labour can always vindicate itself if labour is sufficiently united and self-sacrificing. No matter how oppressive the capitalists may be, I am convinced that those who are connected with labour and guide the labour movement have themselves no idea of the resources that labour can command and which capital can never command. If labour would only understand and recognize that capital is perfectly helpless without labour, labour will immediately come to its own.

We have unfortunately come under the hypnotic suggestion and the hypnotic influence of capital, so that we have come to believe that capital is all in all on this earth. But a moment's thought would show that labour has at its disposal capital which the capitalists will never possess. Ruskin taught in his age that labour had unrivalled opportunities. But he spoke above our heads.

There is in English a very potent word, and you have it in French also, all the languages of the world have it—it is "No", and the secret that we have hit upon is that when capital wants labour to say "Yes", labour roars out "No", if it means "No". And immediately labour comes to recognize that it has got the choice before it of saying "Yes", when it wants to say "Yes", and "No", when it wants to say "No", labour is free of capital and capital has to woo labour.

And it would not matter in the slightest degree that capital has guns and even poison gas at its disposal. Capital would still be perfectly helpless if labour would assert its dignity by making good its "No". Then, labour does not need to retaliate, but labour stands defiant receiving the bullets and poison gas and still insists upon its "No".

The whole reason why labour so often fails is that, instead of sterilizing capital as I have suggested, labour, (I am speaking as a labourer myself) wants to seize that capital and become capitalist itself in the worst sense of the term. And the capitalist, therefore, who is properly entrenched and organized, finding among the labourers also candidates for the same office, makes use of a portion of these to suppress labour. If we really were not under this hypnotic spell, everyone of us, men and women, would recognize this rock-bottom truth without the slightest difficulty.

Having proved it for myself, through a series of experiments carried on in different departments of life, I am speaking to you with authority (you will pardon me for saying so) that, when I put this scheme before you, it

was not as something superhuman but as something within the grasp of every labourer, man or woman.

Again, you will see that what labour is called upon to do under this scheme of non-violence is nothing more than . . . the ordinary soldier who is armed from top to toe is called upon to do. Whilst he undoubtedly seeks to inflict death and destruction upon his adversary, he always carries his own life in his pocket. I want labour, then, to copy the courage of the soldier without copying the brute in the soldier, namely, the ability to inflict death, and I suggest to you that a labourer who courts death and has the courage to die without even carrying arms, with no weapons of self-defence, shows a courage of a much higher degree than a man who is armed from top to toe.³⁴

Gift of Intelligence

The moment labour recognizes its own dignity, money will find its rightful place, i.e., it will be held in trust for labour. For labour is more than money.³⁵

I hold that a working knowledge of a variety of occupations is to the working class what metal is to the capitalist. A labourer's skill is his capital. Just as the capitalist cannot make his capital fructify without the co-operation of labour, even so the working man cannot make his labour fructify without the co-operation of capital.

And, if both labour and capital have the gift of intelligence equally developed in them and have confidence in their capacity to secure a fair deal, each at the hands of the other, they would get to respect and appreciate each other as equal partners in a common enterprise. They need not regard each other as inherently irreconcilable antagonists.

Organization

But the difficulty is that, whilst today capital is organized and seems to be securely entrenched, labour is not. The intelligence of the working man is cramped by his soulless, mechanical occupation which leaves him

little scope or chance to develop his mind. It has prevented him from realizing the power and the full dignity of his status.

He has been taught to believe that his wages have to be dictated by capitalists instead of his demanding his own terms. Let him only be organized along right lines and have his intelligence quickened, let him learn a variety of occupations, and he will be able to go about with his head erect and never be afraid of being without means of sustenance.³⁶

I am not opposed to organization of labour, but as in everything else, I want its organization along Indian lines, or if you will, my lines. I am doing it. The Indian labourer knows it instinctively. I do not regard capital to be the enemy of labour. I hold their co-ordination to be perfectly possible.

The organization of labour that I undertook in South Africa, Champaran or Ahmedabad was in no spirit of hostility to the capitalists. The resistance in each case and to the extent it was thought necessary was wholly successful.³⁷

The labourer has to realize that labour is also capital. As soon as labourers are properly educated and organized and they realize their strength, no amount of capital can subdue them. Organized and enlightened labour can dictate its own terms. It is no use vowing vengeance against a party because we are weak. We have to get strong. Strong hearts, enlightened minds and willing hands can brave all odds and remove all obstacles.³⁸

Conflict Not Inevitable

I do not think there need be any clash between capital and labour. Each is dependent on the other. What is essential today is that the capitalist should not lord it over the labourer. In my opinion, the mill-hands are as much the proprietors of their mills as the shareholders, and when the mill-owners realize that the mill-hands are as much mill-owners as they, there will be no quarrel between them.³⁹

The masses do not see in landlords and other profiteers their enemy. But the consciousness of the wrong done to them by these classes has to be created in them. I do not teach the masses to regard the capitalists as their enemies, but I teach them that they are their own enemies.⁴⁰

There is a conflict of interest between capital and labour, but we have to resolve it by doing our own duty. Just as pure blood is proof against poisonous germs, so will labour, when it is pure, be proof against exploitation.

I never said that there should be co-operation between the exploiter and the exploited so long as exploitation and the will to exploit persists. Only I do not believe that the capitalists and landlords are exploiters by an inherent necessity or that there is a basic or irreconcilable antagonism between their interests and those of the masses.

The idea of class war does not appeal to me. In India a class war is not only not inevitable, it is avoidable if we have understood the message of non-violence. Those who talk about class war as being inevitable have not understood the implications of non-violence or have understood them only skin-deep.⁴¹

Constructive Use

Have I not said that, if they [labour] know their power and use it wisely and constructively, they will become the real rulers and the employers will be their trustees and friends in need and deed? This happy state of things will come only when they know that labour is more real capital than the capital in the shape of gold and silver which labour extracts from the bowels of the earth.⁴²

If every right flows from duty well performed, then it is unassailable. Thus, I have a right to my wage only when I have fully performed the duty undertaken by me. If I took the wage without doing my work, it becomes theft. I cannot associate myself with continuous insistence on rights without reference to the performance of duty on which the rights depend and from which they flow.⁴³

42. STRIKES : LEGITIMATE AND ILLEGITIMATE

Arbitration First

I KNOW that strikes are an inherent right of the working-men for the purpose of securing justice, but they must be considered a crime immediately the capitalists accept the principle of arbitration.⁴⁴

Strikes and Politics

Strikes are the order of the day. They are a symptom of the existing unrest. All kinds of vague ideas are floating in the air. A vague hope inspires all, and great will be the disappointment if that vague hope does not take definite shape. The labour world in India, as elsewhere, is at the mercy of those who set up as advisers and guides. The latter are not always scrupulous, and not always wise even when they are scrupulous. The labourers are dissatisfied with their lot. They have every reason for dissatisfaction. They are being taught, and justly, to regard themselves as being chiefly instrumental in enriching their employers. And so it requires little effort to make them lay down their tools. The political situation, too, is beginning to affect the labourers of India. And there are not wanting labour leaders who consider that strikes may be engineered for political purposes.

In my opinion, it will be a most serious mistake to make use of labour strikes for such a purpose. I don't deny that such strikes can serve political ends. But they do not fall within the plan of non-violent non-co-operation. It does not require much effort of the intellect to perceive that it is a most dangerous thing to make political use of labour until labourers understand the political condition of the country and are prepared to work for the common good. This is hardly to be expected of them all of a sudden and until they have bettered their own condition so as to

enable them to keep body and soul together in a decent manner.

The greatest political contribution, therefore, that labourers can make is to improve their own condition, to become better informed, to insist on their rights, and even to demand proper use by their employers of the manufactures in which they have had such an important hand. The proper evolution, therefore, would be for the labourers to raise themselves to the status of part proprietors. Strikes, therefore, for the present should only take place for the direct betterment of the labourers' lot, and, when they have acquired the spirit of patriotism, for the regulation of prices of their manufactures.

Conditions for Success

The conditions of a successful strike are simple. And when they are fulfilled, a strike need never fail:

(1) The cause of the strike must be just.

(2) There should be practical unanimity among the strikers.

(3) There should be no violence used against non-strikers.

(4) Strikers should be able to maintain themselves during the strike period without falling back upon union funds and should, therefore, occupy themselves in some useful and productive temporary occupation.

(5) A strike is no remedy when there is enough other labour to replace strikers. In that case, in the event of unjust treatment or inadequate wages or the like, resignation is the remedy.

(6) Successful strikes have taken place even when all the above conditions have not been fulfilled, but that merely proves that the employers were weak and had a guilty conscience. We often make terrible mistakes by copying bad examples. The safest thing is not to copy examples of which we have rarely complete knowledge, but to follow the conditions which we know and recognize to be essential for success.⁴⁵

Political Strikes

Obviously, there should be no strike which is not justifiable on merits. No unjust strike should succeed. All public sympathy must be withheld from such strikes.

The public has no means of judging the merits of a strike unless it is backed by impartial persons enjoying public confidence. Interested men cannot judge the merits of their own case. Hence, there must be an arbitration accepted by the parties or a judicial adjudication.

As a rule, the matter does not come before the public when there is accepted arbitration or adjudication. Cases have, however, happened when haughty employers have ignored awards, or misguided employees, conscious of their power to assert themselves, have done likewise and have decided upon forcible extortion.

Strikes for economic betterment should never have a political end as an ulterior motive. Such a mixture never advances the political end and generally brings trouble upon strikers, even when they do not dislocate public life, as in the case of public utility services, such as the postal strike.

The Government may suffer some inconvenience, but will not come to a standstill. Rich persons will put up expensive postal services, but the vast mass of the poor people will be deprived, during such a strike, of a convenience of primary importance to which they have become used for generations. Such strikes can only take place when every other legitimate means has been adopted and [has] failed.

Sympathetic strikes must be taboo until it is conclusively proved that the affected men have exhausted all the legitimate means at their disposal. . . .

It follows from the foregoing that political strikes must be treated on their own merits and must never be mixed with or related to economic strikes. Political strikes have a definite place in non-violent action. They are never taken up haphazard. They must be open, never led by *goondaism*. They are calculated never to lead to violence.⁴⁶

Non-violent Strikes

A pacific strike must be limited to those who are labouring under the grievance to be redressed. Thus, if the match manufacturers, say, of Timbuctoo, who are quite satisfied with their lot, strike out of sympathy for its mill-hands who are getting starvation wages, the match manufacturers' strike would be a species of violence. They may and should help in a most effective manner by withdrawing their custom from the mill-owners of Timbuctoo without laying themselves open to the charge of violence.

But it is possible to conceive occasions when those who are not directly suffering may be under an obligation to cease work. Thus, if in the instance imagined, the masters in the match-factory combine with the mill-owners of Timbuctoo, it will clearly be the duty of the workers in the match-factory to make common cause with the mill-hands. But I have suggested the addition purely by way of illustration. In the last resort, every case has to be judged on its own merits. Violence is a subtle force. It is not easy always to detect its presence though you may feel it all the same.⁴⁷

A strike should be spontaneous and not manipulated. If it is organized without any compulsion, there would be no chance for *goondaism* and looting. Such a strike would be characterized by perfect co-operation amongst the strikers. It should be peaceful and there should be no show of force.

The strikers should take up some work either singly or in co-operation with each other, in order to earn their bread. The nature of such work should have been thought out beforehand. It goes without saying that in a peaceful, effective and firm strike of this character, there will be no room for rowdyism or looting. I have known of such strikes. I have not presented a Utopian picture.⁴⁸

In no case can I be party, irrespective of non-violence, to a universal strike and capture of power.⁴⁹

Capitalism and Strikes

How should capital behave when labour strikes? This question is in the air and has great importance at the

present moment. One way is that of suppression, named or nicknamed 'American'. It consists in suppression of labour through organized *goondaism*. Everybody would consider this as wrong and destructive. The other way, right and honourable, consists in considering every strike on its merits and giving labour its due—not what capital considers as due, but what labour itself would so consider and enlightened public opinion acclaim as just. . . .

As time progresses, the labour world is getting more insistent in its demands which are daily increasing, and it does not hesitate to resort to violence in its impatient enforcement of those demands. New methods of enforcing them are being employed. Workers do not hesitate to injure the property of the employers, dislocate machinery, harass old men and women who would not join the strike, and forcibly keep out blacklegs. In these circumstances, how are the employers to behave?

. . . My advice to the employers would be that they should willingly regard workers as the real owners of the concerns which they fancy they have created. They should further regard it as their duty to equip the employees with sound education that would draw out the intelligence dormant in them and gladly promote and welcome the power that this combination of the workers gives them.

This noble work cannot be done in a day by the employers. Meanwhile, what should those do who have to face the destruction wrought by strikers in their concerns? I would unhesitatingly advise such employers that they should at once offer the strikers full control of the concern which is as much the strikers' as theirs. They will vacate their premises not in a huff but because it is right, and to show their good-will, they would offer the employees the assistance of their engineers and other skilled staff.

The employers will find in the end that they will lose nothing. Indeed, their right action will disarm opposition and they will earn the blessings of their men. They will have made proper use of their capital. I would not consider such action as benevolent. It would be an intelligent use by the capitalists of their resources and honest dealing in

regard to the employees whom they would have converted into honourable partners.⁵⁰

Sympathetic Strikes

Any premature precipitation of sympathetic strikes must . . . result in infinite harm to our cause. In the programme of non-violence, we must rigidly exclude the idea of gaining anything by embarrassing the Government. If our activity is pure and that of the Government is impure, the latter is embarrassed by our purity, if it does not itself become pure. Thus, a movement of purification benefits both parties, whereas a movement of mere destruction leaves the destroyer unpurified, and brings him down to the level of those whom he seeks to destroy.

Even our sympathetic strikes have to be strikes for self-purification, i.e., non-co-operation. And so, when we declare a strike to redress a wrong, we really cease to take part in the wrong, and thus leave the wrong-doer to his own resources, in other words, enable him to see the folly of continuing the wrong. Such a strike can only succeed when behind it is the fixed determination not to revert to service. . . .

A strike may fail in spite of a just grievance and the ability of strikers to hold out indefinitely, if there are workers to replace them. A wise man, therefore, will not strike for increase of wages or other comforts if he feels that he can be easily replaced. But a philanthropic or patriotic man will strike in spite of supply being greater than the demand, when he feels for and wishes to associate himself with his neighbour's distress. Needless to say, there is no room in a civil strike of the nature described by me for violence in the shape of intimidation, incendiarism or otherwise.⁵¹

. . . What about the blacklegs, you may ask. Blacklegs unfortunately there will be. But I would urge you not to fight them, but to plead with them, to tell them that theirs is a narrow policy and that yours has the interest of the whole labour at heart. It is likely that they may not listen to you. In that case you will tolerate them, but not fight them.⁵²

The fundamental reason for this spreading strike fever is that life here, as elsewhere, is today uprooted from its basis, the basis of religion, and what an English writer has called 'cash nexus' has taken its place. And that is a precarious bond. But even when the religious basis is there, there will be strikes, because it is scarcely conceivable that religion will have become for all the basis of life. So, there will be attempts at exploitation, on the one hand, and strikes, on the other. But these strikes will then be of a purely non-violent character.

Such strikes never do harm to any one. It was such a strike perhaps that brought General Smuts to his knees. "If you had hurt an Englishman," said Jan Smuts, "I would have shot you, even deported your people. As it is, I have put you in prison and tried to subdue you and your people in every way. But how long can I go on like this when you do not retaliate?" And so he had to come to terms with a mere 'coolie' on behalf of 'coolies', as all Indians were then called in South Africa.⁵³

43. TILLERS OF THE SOIL

Recognition of the Ryot

IF INDIAN society is to make real progress along peaceful lines, there must be a definite recognition on the part of the moneyed class that the ryot possesses the same soul that they do, and that their wealth gives them no superiority over the poor. They must regard themselves, even as the Japanese nobles did, as trustees holding their wealth for the good of their wards, the ryots. Then they would take no more than a reasonable amount as commission for their labours.

At present, there is no proportion between the wholly unnecessary pomp and extravagance of the moneyed class and the squalid surroundings and the grinding pauperism of the ryots in whose midst the former are living. . . .

If only the capitalist class will read the signs of the times, revise their notions of God-given right to all they possess, in an incredibly short space of time, the seven hundred thousand dung-heaps which today pass muster as villages can be turned into abodes of peace, health and comfort.

I am convinced that the capitalist, if he follows the Samurai of Japan, has nothing really to lose and everything to gain. There is no other choice than between voluntary surrender on the part of the capitalist of superfluities and consequent acquisition of the real happiness of all, on the one hand and, on the other, the impending chaos into which, if the capitalist does not wake up betimes, awakened but ignorant, famishing millions will plunge the country and which not even the armed force that a powerful Government can bring into play can avert. I have hoped that India will successfully avert the disaster.⁵⁴

The dream I want to realize is not spoliation of the property of private owners, but to restrict its enjoyment so as to avoid all pauperism, consequent discontent and the hideously ugly contrast that exists today between the lives and surroundings of the rich and the poor. The latter must be enabled to feel that they are co-partners with their zamindars and not their slaves, to be made to labour at the latter's sweet will and to be made to pay all kinds of exactions on all conceivable occasions.⁵⁵

I would like to use the landlords and the capitalists for the service of the masses. We must not sacrifice the interests of the masses to the capitalists. We must not play their game. We must trust them to the measure of their ability to surrender their gains to the service of the masses. They are not insusceptible to the higher appeal. It has been my invariable experience that a kind word uttered goes home to them. If we gain their confidence and put them at their ease, we will find that they are not averse to progressively sharing their riches with the masses.⁵⁶

Conversion of Zamindars

I do not want to destroy the zamindar, but neither do I feel the zamindar is inevitable. . . . I expect to convert the

zamindars and other capitalists by the non-violent method, and, therefore, there is for me nothing like an inevitability of class conflict. For it is an essential part of non-violence to go along the line of least resistance.

The moment the cultivators of the soil realize their power, the zamindari evil will be sterilized. What can the poor zamindar do when they say that they will simply not work the land unless they are paid enough to feed and clothe and educate themselves and their children in a decent manner? In reality, the toiler is the owner of what he produces. If the toilers intelligently combine, they will become an irresistible power. That is how I do not see the necessity of class conflict. If I thought it inevitable, I should not hesitate to preach it and teach it.⁵⁷

I do not want the power of a Hitler, I want the power of a free peasant. I have been trying to identify myself with the peasants all these years, but have not succeeded in doing so. What, however, differentiates me from the kisan today is that he is a kisan and a labourer not by choice but by force of circumstances. I want to be a kisan and a labourer by choice, and when I can make him also a kisan and a labourer by choice, I can also enable him to throw off the shackles that keep him bound today and that compel him to do the master's bidding.⁵⁸

The Kisans

The kisan or the peasant, whether as a landless labourer or a labouring proprietor, comes first. He is the salt of the earth which rightly belongs or should belong to him, not to the absentee landlord or zamindar. But, in the non-violent way, the labourer cannot forcibly eject the absentee landlord. He has so to work as to make it impossible for the landlord to exploit him.

Closest co-operation amongst the peasants is absolutely necessary. To this end special organizing bodies or committees should be formed where there are none and those already in existence should be reformed where necessary.

The kisans are for the most part illiterate. Both adults and young persons of school-going age should be educated. This applies to men and women. Where they are landless labourers, their wages should be brought to a level that would ensure a decent living, which should mean balanced food, dwelling houses and clothing, which should satisfy health requirements.⁵⁹

Non-violence, Not Legislation

If Swaraj is attained by the effort of the whole people, as it must be under non-violence, the kisans must come into their own and have the uppermost voice. But if it is not so and there is a sort of a workable compromise between the people and the Government on the basis of a limited franchise, the interests of the tiller of the soil will need close watching. If the legislature proves itself to be incapable of safeguarding Kisans' interests, they will, of course, always have the sovereign remedy of civil disobedience and non-co-operation.

But . . . ultimately it is not paper legislation nor brave words nor fiery speeches, but the power of non-violent organization, discipline and sacrifice that constitutes the real bulwark of the people against injustice or oppression.

I have no doubt that if we have democratic Swaraj, as it must be if the freedom is won through non-violence, the kisan must hold power in all its phases including political power.⁶⁰

Years ago I read a poem in which the peasant is described as the father of the world. If God is the Provider, the cultivator is His hand. What are we going to do to discharge the debt we owe to him? So long we have only lived on the sweat of his brow.⁶¹

44. CHOICE BEFORE LABOUR

TWO PATHS are open before India today, either to introduce the Western principle of "Might is Right" or to uphold the Eastern principle that truth alone conquers, that truth knows no mishap, that the strong and the weak have alike a right to secure justice.

The choice is to begin with the labouring class. Should the labourers obtain an increment in their wages by violence, even if that be possible? They cannot resort to anything like violence howsoever legitimate may be their claims.

To use violence for securing rights may seem an easy path, but it proves to be thorny in the long run. Those who live by the sword die also by the sword. The swimmer often dies by drowning. Look at Europe. No one seems to be happy there, for not one is contented. The labourer does not trust the capitalist and the capitalist has no faith in the labourer. Both have a sort of vigour and strength, but even the bulls have it. They fight to the very bitter end.

All motion is not progress. We have got no reason to believe that the people of Europe are progressing. Their possession of wealth does not argue the possession of any moral or spiritual qualities. King Duryodhana was a master of untold wealth, but with all that he was a pauper in comparison with Vidura and Sudama. Today the world adores Vidura and Sudama, whereas Duryodhana's name is remembered only as a by-word for the evil qualities one should shun. . . .

Labour's Strength

In the struggle between capital and labour, it may be generally said that, more often than not, the capitalists are in the wrong box. But when labour comes fully to realize its strength, I know it can become more tyrannical than

capital. The mill-owners will have to work on the terms dictated by labour if the latter could command the intelligence of the former. It is clear, however, that labour will never attain to that intelligence. If it does, labour will cease to be labour and become itself the master. The capitalists do not fight on the strength of money alone. They possess intelligence and tact. . . .

A third party has sprung up between these two parties. It has become the labourers' friend. There is need for such a party. Only to the extent to which this party has disinterested friendship for the labourers can it befriend them.

A time has come now when attempts will be made to use labour as a pawn in more ways than one. The occasion demands consideration at the hands of those that would take part in politics. What will they choose? Their own interest or the service of labour and the nation? Labour stands in sore need of friends. It cannot proceed without a lead. What sort of men give this lead will decide the conditions of labour.

Strikes, cessation of work and *hartal* are wonderful things no doubt, but it is not difficult to abuse them. Workmen ought to organize themselves into strong labour unions, and on no account shall they strike work without the consent of these unions.

Strikes should not be risked without negotiation with the mill-owners. If the mill-owners resort to arbitration, the principle of *Panchayat* should be accepted. And once the *pancha* are appointed, their decision must be accepted by both the parties alike, whether they like or not.⁶²

IX: SARVODAYA

45. THE GOSPEL OF SARVODAYA

Unity of Man

I DO not believe . . . that an individual may gain spiritually and those who surround him suffer. I believe in *advaita*, I believe in the essential unity of man and, for that matter, of all that lives. Therefore, I believe that if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him and, if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent.¹

I do not believe that the spiritual law works on a field of its own. On the contrary, it expresses itself only through the ordinary activities of life. It thus affects the economic, the social and the political fields.²

If we would serve Him or become one with Him, our activity must be as unwearied as His. There may be momentary rest in store for the drop which is separated from the ocean, but not for the drop in the ocean, which knows no rest. The same is the case with ourselves.

As soon as we become one with the ocean in the shape of God, there is no more rest for us, nor indeed do we need rest any longer. Our very sleep is action. For we sleep with the thought of God in our hearts. This restlessness constitutes true rest. This never-ceasing agitation holds the key to peace ineffable. This supreme state of total surrender is difficult to describe, but not beyond the bounds of human experience. It has been attained by many dedicated souls, and may be attained by ourselves as well.³

Identification with Poor

I cannot imagine anything nobler or more national than that for, say, one hour in the day, we should all do the labour that the poor must do, and thus identify

ourselves with them and through them with all mankind. I cannot imagine better worship of God than that, in His name, I should labour for the poor even as they do.⁴

God demands nothing less than self-surrender as the price for the only real freedom that is worth having. And when a man thus loses himself, he immediately finds himself in the service of God's creation.⁵

All our activities should be centred in Truth. Truth should be the very breath of our life. When once this stage in the pilgrims' progress is reached, all other rules of correct living will come without effort, and obedience to them will be instinctive. But without Truth it is impossible to observe any principles or rules in life.⁶

Faith in Providence

A seeker after Truth, a follower of the Law of Love, cannot hold anything against tomorrow. God never provides for the morrow; He never creates more than what is strictly needed from day to day. If, therefore, we repose faith in His Providence, we should rest assured that He will give us every day our daily bread, supplying enough that we require.⁷

Service of Man

Man's ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, social, political, religious, have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all. I am a part and parcel of the whole and I cannot find Him apart from the rest of humanity.

My countrymen are my nearest neighbours. They have become so helpless, so resourceless, so inert that I must concentrate myself on serving them. If I could persuade myself that I could find Him in a Himalayan cave, I would proceed there immediately. But I know that I cannot find Him apart from humanity.⁸

My God is myriad-formed and, while sometimes I see Him in the spinning-wheel, at other times I see Him in communal unity; then again in the removal of untouchability and that is how I establish communion with Him according as the spirit moves me.⁹

Charkha a Means

He who spins before the poor, inviting them to do likewise, serves God as no one else does. 'He who gives me even a trifle as a fruit or a flower or even a leaf in the spirit of *bhakti* is my servant', says the Lord in the Bhagavad-gita.

And He hath His footstool where live the humble, the lowliest and the lost. Spinning, therefore, for such is the greatest prayer, the greatest worship, the greatest sacrifice.¹⁰

The world is weary of the after-effects of the War. Even as the Charkha is India's comforter today, it may be the world's tomorrow, because it stands, not for the greatest good of the greatest number, but for the greatest good of all.¹¹

I stand by what is implied in the phrase, 'Unto This Last'. That book marked the turning in my life. We must do even unto this last as we would have the world do by us. All must have equal opportunity. Given the opportunity, every human being has the same possibility for spiritual growth. That is what the spinning-wheel symbolizes.¹²

Self-purification

Identification with everything that lives is impossible without self-purification; without self-purification the observance of the law of *ahimsa* must remain an empty dream; God can never be realized by one who is not pure of heart. Self-purification, therefore, must mean purification in all the walks of life. And purification being highly infectious, purification of oneself necessarily leads to the purification of one's surroundings.

But the path of purification is hard and steep. To attain to perfect purity one has to become absolutely

passion-free in thought, speech and action; to rise above the opposing currents of love and hatred, attachment and repulsion. I know that I have not in me as yet that triple purity, in spite of constant ceaseless striving for it. That is why the world's praise fails to move me, indeed, it very often stings me.

To conquer the subtle passions seems to me to be harder far than the physical conquest of the world by the force of arms.

. . . I have had experiences of the dormant passions lying hidden within me. The knowledge of them has made me feel humiliated, though not defeated. The experiences and experiments have sustained me and given me great joy. But I know that I have still before me a difficult path to traverse. I must reduce myself to zero. So long as a man does not of his own free will put himself last among his fellow-creatures, there is no salvation for him. *Ahimsa* is the farthest limit of humility.¹³

Ends and Means

Means and ends are convertible terms in my philosophy of life.¹⁴

The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree.¹⁵

No Separation

They say, 'means are after all means'. I would say, 'means are after all everything'. As the means so the end. . . . There is no wall of separation between the means and the end. Indeed, the Creator has given us control (and that, too, very limited) over means, none over the end. Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception.¹⁶

Providence has its appointed hour for everything. We cannot command results; we can only strive. And so far as I am concerned, it is enough satisfaction for me to know that I have striven my utmost to discharge the duty that rested on me.¹⁷

Rights and Duties

The true source of rights is duty. If we all discharge our duties, rights will not be far to seek. If leaving duties unperformed we run after rights, they will escape us like a will-o'-the-wisp. The more we pursue them, the farther will they fly. The same teaching has been embodied by Krishna in the immortal words: 'Action alone is thine. Leave thou the fruit severely alone.' Action is duty; fruit is the right.¹⁸

Rights accrue automatically to him who duly performs his duties. In fact, the right to perform one's duties is the only right that is worth living for and dying for. It covers all legitimate rights. All the rest is grab under one guise or another and contains in it seeds of *himsa*.

The capitalist and the zamindar talk of their rights, the labourer on the other hand of his, the prince of his divine right to rule, the ryot of his to resist it. If all simply insist on rights and no duties, there will be utter confusion and chaos.¹⁹

If, instead of insisting on rights, everyone does his duty, there will immediately be the rule of order established among mankind. . . . I venture to suggest that rights that do not flow directly from duty well performed are not worth having. They will be usurpations, sooner discarded the better. A wretched parent who claims obedience from his children without first doing his duty by them excites nothing but contempt.

It is distortion of religious precepts for a dissolute husband to expect compliance in every respect from his dutiful wife. But the children who flout their parent who is ever ready to do his duty towards them would be considered ungrateful and would harm themselves more than their parent. The same can be said about husband and wife.

If you apply this simple and universal rule to employers and labourers, landlords and tenants, the princes and their subjects or the Hindus and the Muslims, you will find that the happiest relations can be established in all

walks of life without creating disturbances in and dislocation of life and business which you see in India as in other parts of the world. What I call the law of Satyagraha is to be deduced from an appreciation of duties and rights flowing therefrom.²⁰

46. THE PHILOSOPHY OF YAJNA

Meaning of Yajna

YAJNA MEANS an act directed to the welfare of others, done without desiring any return for it, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature. 'Act' here must be taken in its widest sense, and includes thought and word, as well as deed. 'Others' embraces not only humanity, but all life. . . .

Again, a primary sacrifice must be an act which conduces the most to the welfare of the greatest number in the widest area, and which can be performed by the largest number of men and women with the least trouble. It will not, therefore, be a *yajna*, much less a *mahayajna*, to wish or to do ill to anyone else, even in order to serve a so-called higher interest. And the Gita teaches and experience testifies that all action that cannot come under the category of *yajna* promotes bondage.

The world cannot subsist for a single moment without *yajna* in this sense, and therefore, the Gita, after having dealt with true wisdom in the second chapter, takes up in the third the means of attaining it, and declares in so many words that *yajna* came with the Creation itself. This body, therefore, has been given us only in order that we may serve all Creation with it. And therefore, says the Gita, he who eats without offering *yajna* eats stolen food. Every single act of one who would lead a life of purity should be in the nature of *yajna*.

Yajna having come to us with our birth, we are debtors all our lives, and thus for ever bound to serve the universe. And even as a bonds slave receives food, clothing and

so on from the master whom he serves, so should we gratefully accept such gifts as may be assigned to us by the Lord of the universe. What we receive must be called a gift; for as debtors we are entitled to no consideration for the discharge of our obligations. Therefore, we may not blame the Master, if we fail to get it. Our body is His to be cherished or cast away according to His will.

This is not a matter for complaint or even pity; on the contrary, it is a natural and even a pleasant and desirable state if only we realize our proper place in God's scheme. We do, indeed, need strong faith if we would experience this supreme bliss. "Do not worry in the least about yourself, leave all worry to God,"—this appears to be the commandment in all religions.

This need not frighten anyone. He who devotes himself to service with a clear conscience will day by day grasp the necessity for it in greater measure, and will continually grow richer in faith. The path of service can hardly be trodden by one who is not prepared to renounce self-interest, and to recognize the conditions of his birth. Consciously or unconsciously, every one of us does render some service or other. If we cultivate the habit of doing this service deliberately, our desire for service will steadily grow stronger, and will make not only for our own happiness, but that of the world at large.²¹

Yajna in Practice

Yajna is duty to be performed, or service to be rendered, all the twenty-four hours of the day. . . . To serve without desire is to favour not others, but ourselves, even as in discharging a debt we serve only ourselves, lighten our burden and fulfil our duty. Again, not only the good, but all of us are bound to place our resources at the disposal of humanity. And if such is the law, as evidently it is, indulgence ceases to hold a place in life and gives way to renunciation. The duty of renunciation differentiates mankind from the beast. . . .

But renunciation here does not mean abandoning the world and retiring into the forest. The spirit of renunciation

should rule all the activities of life. A householder does not cease to be one if he regards life as a duty rather than as an indulgence. A merchant, who operates in the sacrificial spirit, will have crores passing through his hands, but he will, if he follows the law, use his abilities for service. He will, therefore, not cheat or speculate, will lead a simple life, will not injure a living soul and will lose millions rather than harm anybody.

Let no one run away with the idea that this type of merchant exists only in my imagination. Fortunately for the world, it does exist in the West as well as in the East. It is true such merchants may be counted on one's fingers' ends, but the type ceases to be imaginary as soon as even one living specimen can be found to answer to it. . . . And if we go deeply into the matter, we shall come across men in every walk of life who lead dedicated lives. No doubt these sacrificers obtain their livelihood by their work. But livelihood is not their objective, but only a by-product of their vocation. . . .

A life of sacrifice is the pinnacle of art, and is full of true joy. *Yajna* is not *yajna* if one feels it to be burdensome or annoying. Self-indulgence leads to destruction, and renunciation to immortality. Joy has no independent existence. It depends upon our attitude of life. One man will enjoy theatrical scenery, another the ever-new scenes which unfold themselves in the sky. Joy, therefore, is a matter of individual and national education. We shall delight in things which we have been taught to delight in as children. And illustrations can be easily cited of different national tastes. . . .

Voluntary Service

One who would serve will not waste a thought upon his own comforts, which he leaves to be attended to or neglected by his Master on high. He will not, therefore, encumber himself with everything that comes his way; he will take only what he strictly needs and leave the rest. He will be calm, free from anger and unruffled in mind even if he finds himself inconvenienced. His service, like virtue, is its own reward, and he will rest content with it.

Again, one dare not be negligent in service, or be behindhand with it. He who thinks that he must be diligent only in his personal business, and unpaid public business may be done in any way and at any time he chooses, has still to learn the very rudiments of the science of sacrifice. Voluntary service of others demands the best of which one is capable, and must take precedence over service of self. In fact, the pure devotee consecrates himself to the service of humanity without any reservation whatever.²²

47. THIS SATANIC CIVILIZATION

It is my firm belief that Europe today represents not the spirit of God or Christianity but the spirit of Satan. And Satan's successes are the greatest when he appears with the name of God on his lips. Europe is today only nominally Christian. In reality, it is worshipping Mammon.²³

I am not aiming at destroying railways or hospitals, though I would certainly welcome their natural destruction. Neither railways nor hospitals are a test of a high and pure civilization. At best they are a necessary evil. Neither adds one inch to the moral stature of a nation.

Nor am I aiming at a permanent destruction of law courts, much as I regard it as a 'consummation devoutly to be wished'. Still less am I trying to destroy all machinery and mills. It requires a higher simplicity and renunciation than the people are today prepared for.²⁴

Status of Soul

I do want growth, I do want self-determination, I do want freedom, but I want all these for the soul. I doubt if the steel age is an advance upon the flint age. I am indifferent. It is the evolution of the soul to which the intellect and all our faculties have to be devoted.²⁵

India's Way

I would have our leaders teach us to be morally supreme in the world. This land of ours was once, we are told, the abode of the gods. It is not possible to conceive gods inhabiting a land which is made hideous by the smoke and the din of mill chimneys and factories and whose roadways are traversed by rushing engines, dragging numerous cars crowded with men who know not for the most part what they are after, who are often absent-minded, and whose tempers do not improve by being uncomfortably packed like sardines in boxes and finding themselves in the midst of utter strangers who would oust them if they could and whom they would, in their turn, oust similarly. I refer to these things because they are held to be symbolical of material progress. But they add not an atom to our happiness.²⁶

Modern Civilization

Formerly, when people wanted to fight with one another, they measured between them their bodily strength; now, it is possible to take away thousands of lives by one man working behind a gun from a hill. This is civilization. Formerly, men worked in open air only as much as they liked. Now thousands of workmen meet together and, for the sake of maintenance, work in factories or mines. Their condition is worse than that of beasts. They are obliged to work, at the risk of their lives, at most dangerous occupations, for the sake of millionaires. . . . This civilization is such that one has only to be patient and it will be self-destroyed.²⁷

Is the world any the better for quick instruments of locomotion? How do these instruments advance man's spiritual progress? Do they not in the last resort hamper it? And is there any limit to man's ambition? Once we were satisfied with travelling a few miles an hour; today we want to negotiate hundreds of miles an hour; one day we might desire to fly through space. What will be the result? Chaos.²⁸

I wholeheartedly detest this mad desire to destroy distance and time, to increase animal appetites and go to the ends of the earth in search of their satisfaction. If modern civilization stands for all this, and I have understood it to do so, I call it satanic. . . .²⁹

Nemesis of Industrialization

This industrial civilization is a disease because it is *all* evil. Let us not be deceived by catchwords and phrases. I have no quarrel with steamships or telegraphs. They may stay, if they can, without the support of industrialism and all that it connotes. They are not an end. We must not suffer exploitation for the sake of steamships and telegraphs. They are in no way indispensable for the permanent welfare of the human race. Now that we know the use of steam and electricity, we should be able to use them on due occasion and after we have learnt to avoid industrialism. Our concern is, therefore, to destroy industrialism at any cost.³⁰

A time is coming when those, who are in the mad rush today of multiplying their wants, vainly thinking that they add to the real substance, real knowledge of the world, will retrace their steps and say: 'What have we done?'

Civilizations have come and gone, and in spite of all our vaunted progress, I am tempted to ask again and again, 'To what purpose?' Wallace, a contemporary of Darwin, has said the same thing. Fifty years of brilliant inventions and discoveries, he has said, have not added one inch to the moral height of mankind. So said a dreamer and visionary if you will—Tolstoy. So said Jesus, and the Buddha, and Mahomed, whose religion is being denied and falsified in my own country today.

God and Mammon

By all means drink deep of the fountains that are given to you in the Sermon on the Mount, but then you will have to take sackcloth and ashes. The teaching of the Sermon was meant for each and every one of us. You cannot serve both God and Mammon. God the Compassionate

and the Merciful, Tolerance incarnate, allows Mammon to have his nine days' wonder. But I say to you . . . fly from that self-destroying but destructive show of Mammon.³¹

I would destroy the system today, if I had the power. I would use the most deadly weapons, if I believed that they would destroy it. I refrain only because the use of such weapons would only perpetuate the system though it may destroy its present administrators.³²

The West

I am humble enough to admit that there is much that we can profitably assimilate from the West. Wisdom is no monopoly of one continent or one race. My resistance to Western civilization is really a resistance to its indiscriminate and thoughtless imitation based on the assumption that Asiatics are fit only to copy everything that comes from the West.

I do believe, that if India has patience enough to go through the fire of suffering and to resist any unlawful encroachment upon her own civilization which, imperfect though it undoubtedly is, has hitherto stood the ravages of time, she can make a lasting contribution to the peace and solid progress of the world.³³

48. MAN *v.* MACHINE

I WOULD not weep over the disappearance of machinery or consider it a calamity. But I have no design upon machinery as such.³⁴

Reinstatement of Man

The supremè consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of man.³⁵

I have the conviction within me that, when all these achievements of the machine age will have disappeared, these 'our handicrafts will remain; when all exploitation will have ceased, service and honest labour will remain.

It is because this faith sustains me that I am going on with my work. . . . Indomitable faith in their work sustained men like Stephenson and Columbus. Faith in my work sustains me.³⁶

Faith in my work sustains me, but there is also added to it the conviction that all the other things that seem to challenge my faith are doomed. . . . I am clear that, whilst this machine age aims at converting men into machines, I am aiming at reinstating man turned machine into his original estate.³⁷

Ideally . . . I would rule out all machinery, even as I would reject this very body, which is not helpful to salvation, and seek the absolute liberation of the soul. From that point of view, I would reject all machinery, but machines will remain because, like the body, they are inevitable. The body itself . . . is the purest piece of mechanism; but if it is a hindrance to the highest flights of the soul, it has to be rejected.³⁸

Evil of Machinery

Machinery is like a snake-hole which may contain from one to a hundred snakes. Where there is machinery, there are large cities; where there are large cities, there are tram-cars and railways. And there only does one see electric light. Honest physicians will tell you that where means of artificial locomotion have increased, the health of the people has suffered. I remember that, when in a European town there was scarcity of money, the receipts of the tramway company, of the lawyers and of the doctors went down, and the people were less unhealthy. I cannot recall a single good point in connexion with machinery.³⁹

Saving of Labour

What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all.

The saving of labour of the individual should be the object, and not human greed the motive. Thus, for instance, I would welcome any day a machine to straighten crooked spindles. Not that blacksmiths will cease to make spindles; they will continue to provide spindles, but when the spindle goes wrong, every spinner will have a machine to get it straight. Therefore, replace greed by love and everything will be all right.⁴⁰

I can have no consideration for machinery which is meant either to enrich the few at the expense of the many, or without cause to displace the useful labour of many.⁴¹

Mechanization is good when hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil where there are more hands than required for the work, as is the case of India. The problem with us is not how to find leisure for the teeming millions inhabiting our villages. The problem is how to utilize their idle hours, which are equal to the working days of six months in the year.⁴²

But why not, it is asked, save the labours of millions, and give them more leisure for intellectual pursuits? Leisure is good and necessary up to a point only. God created man to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, and I dread the prospect of our being able to produce all that we want, including our food-stuffs, out of a conjuror's hat.

A factory employs a few hundreds and renders thousands unemployed. I may produce tons of oil from an oil-mill, but I also drive thousands of oil-men out of employment. I call this destructive energy, whereas production by the labour of millions of hands is constructive and conducive to the common good. Mass-production through power-driven machinery, even when State-owned, will be of no avail.⁴³

My opposition to machinery is much misunderstood. I am not opposed to machinery as such. I am opposed to machinery which displaces labour and leaves it idle.⁴⁴

I refuse to be dazzled by the seeming triumph of machinery. I am uncompromisingly against all destructive

machinery. But simple tools and instruments and such machinery as saves individual labour and lightens the burden of the millions of cottages I should welcome.⁴⁵

I hold that the machinery method is harmful when the same thing can be done easily by millions of hands not otherwise occupied. It is any day better and safer for the millions, spread in the seven hundred thousand villages of India, scattered over an area nineteen hundred miles long and fifteen hundred broad, that they manufacture their clothing in their own villages, even as they prepare their own food. These villages cannot retain the freedom they have enjoyed from time immemorial if they do not control the production of prime necessities of life.⁴⁶

Mass-production

Mass-production takes no note of the real requirement of the consumer. If mass-production were in itself a virtue, it should be capable of indefinite multiplication. But it can be definitely shown that mass-production carries within it its own limitations. If all countries adopted the system of mass-production, there would not be a big enough market for their products. Mass-production must then come to a stop.⁴⁷

I would categorically state my conviction that the mania for mass-production is responsible for the world crises. Granting for the moment that machinery may supply all the needs of humanity, still it would concentrate production in particular areas, so that you would have to go in a roundabout way to regulate distribution, whereas, if there is production and distribution both in the respective areas where things are required, it is automatically regulated and there is less chance for fraud, none for speculation.

[I envisage] mass-production, certainly, but not based on force. After all, the message of the spinning-wheel is that. It is mass-production, but mass-production in people's own homes. If you multiply individual production to

millions of times, would it not give you mass-production on a tremendous scale?⁴⁸

Concentration of Wealth

I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might. . . .⁴⁹

Organization of machinery for the purpose of concentrating wealth and power in the hands of a few and for the exploitation of many I hold to be altogether wrong. Much of the organization of machinery of the present age is of that type. The movement of the spinning-wheel is an organized attempt to displace machinery from that state of exclusiveness and exploitation and to place it in its proper state. Under my scheme, therefore, men in charge of machinery will think not of themselves or even of the nation to which they belong, but of the whole human race.⁵⁰

Dead machinery must not be pitted against the millions of living machines represented by the villagers scattered in the seven hundred thousand villages of India. Machinery to be well used has to help and ease human effort. The present use of machinery tends more and more to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few in total disregard of millions of men and women whose bread is snatched by it out of their mouths.⁵¹

Decentralization

When production and consumption both become localized, the temptation to speed up production, indefinitely and at any price, disappears. All the endless difficulties and problems that our present-day economic system presents, too, would then come to an end. . . . There would be no unnatural accumulation of hoards in the pockets of the few, and want in the midst of plenty in regard to the rest. . . .

Under my system, again, it is labour which is the current coin, not metal. Any person who can use his labour has that coin, has wealth. He converts his labour into cloth, he converts his labour into grain. If he wants paraffin oil, which he cannot himself produce, he uses his surplus grain for getting the oil. It is exchange of labour on free, fair and equal terms—hence it is no robbery. You may object that this is a reversion to the primitive system of barter. But is not all international trade based on the barter system?⁵²

I am personally opposed to great trusts and concentration of industries by means of elaborate machinery. . . . If India takes to Khaddar and all it means, I do not lose the hope of India taking only as much of the modern machinery system as may be considered necessary for the amenities of life and labour-saving devices.⁵³

No Exploitation

Thus Lancashire men will cease to use their machinery for exploiting India and other countries, but on the contrary they will devise means of enabling India to convert in her own villages her cotton into cloth. Nor will Americans under my scheme seek to enrich themselves by exploiting the other races of the earth through their inventive skill.⁵⁴

What is the cause of the present chaos? It is exploitation, I will not say of the weaker nations by the stronger, but of sister nations by sister nations. And my fundamental objection to machinery rests on the fact that it is machinery that has enabled these nations to exploit others. In itself it is a wooden thing and can be turned to good purpose or bad. But it is easily turned to a bad purpose as we know.⁵⁵

Place of Machinery

Machinery has its place; it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace necessary human labour. . . .

An improved plough is a good thing. But if by some chance, one man who could plough up by some mechanical invention of his the whole of the land of India, and

control all the agricultural produce, and if the millions had no other occupation, they would starve, and being idle, they would become dunces, as many have already become. There is hourly danger of many more being reduced to that unenviable state.

I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine, but I know that it is criminal to displace hand labour by the introduction of power-driven spindles unless one is, at the same time, ready to give millions of farmers some other occupation in their homes.⁵⁶

I would prize every invention of science made for the benefit of all. There is a difference between invention and invention. I should not care for the asphyxiating gases capable of killing masses of men at a time. The heavy machinery for work of public utility, which cannot be undertaken by human labour, has its inevitable place, but all that would be owned by the State and used entirely for the benefit of the people.⁵⁷

Challenge of Machine Age

Ours has been described as the machine age because the machine dominates our economy. 'Now, what is a machine?' one may ask. In a sense, man is the most wonderful machine in creation. It can neither be duplicated nor copied. I have, however, used the word not in its wider sense, but in the sense of an appliance that tends to displace human or animal labour instead of supplementing it or merely increasing its efficiency.

This is the first differential characteristic of the machine. The second characteristic is that there is no limit to its growth or evolution. This cannot be said of human labour. There is a limit beyond which its capacity or mechanical efficiency cannot go. Out of this circumstance arises the characteristic of the machine.

It seems to be possessed of a will or genius of its own. It is antagonistic to man's labour. Thus it tends more to displace man, one machine doing the work of hundred, if not a thousand, who go to swell the army of the unemployed and the under-employed, not because it is

desirable but because that is its law. In America it has perhaps reached the extreme limit.

I have been opposed to it not from today, but even before 1908, when I was in South Africa, surrounded by machines. Their onward march had not only not impressed me but had repelled me. It then dawned on me that to suppress and exploit the millions, the machine is the devil *par excellence*, it had no place in man's economy if, as social units, all men were to be equal. It is my belief that the machine has not added to man's stature and it will not serve the world but disrupt it, unless it is put in its proper place.

Then I read Ruskin's *Unto This Last* during a train journey to Durban and it gripped me immediately. I saw clearly that, if mankind was to progress and to realize the ideal of equality and brotherhood, it must adopt and act on the principle of *Unto This Last*. It must take along with it even the dumb, the halt and the lame. Did not Yudhishthira, the Prince of Righteousness, refuse to enter heaven without his faithful dog?⁵⁸

Today there is such an onslaught on India of Western machinery that for India to withstand it successfully would be nothing short of a miracle.⁵⁹

49. THE CURSE OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

IT IS good to have faith in human nature. I live because I have that faith. But that faith does not blind me to the fact of history that, whilst in the ultimate all is well, individuals and groups called nations have before now perished. Rome, Greece, Babylon, Egypt and many others are a standing testimony in proof of the fact that nations have perished before now because of their misdeeds.

What may be hoped for is that Europe, on account of her fine and scientific intellect, will realize the obvious and retrace her steps and, from the demoralizing

industrialism, she will find a way out. It will not necessarily be a return to the old absolute simplicity. But it will have to be a reorganization in which village life will predominate, and in which brute and material force will be subordinated to the spiritual force.⁶⁰

The future of industrialism is dark. England has got successful competitors in America, Japan, France and Germany. It has competitors in the handful of mills in India, and as there has been an awakening in India, even so there will be an awakening in South Africa with its vastly richer resources—natural, mineral and human.

The mighty English look quite pigmies before the mighty races of Africa. They are noble savages after all, you will say. They are certainly noble, but no savages; and in the course of a few years, the Western nations may cease to find in Africa a dumping ground for their wares. And if the future of industrialism is dark for the West, would it not be darker still for India?⁶¹

Industrialism is, I am afraid, going to be a curse for mankind. Exploitation of one nation by another cannot go on for all time. Industrialism depends entirely on your capacity to exploit, on foreign markets being open to you, and on the absence of competitors. . . .⁶²

As I look to Russia, where the apotheosis of industrialization has been reached, the life there does not appeal to me. To use the language of the Bible, 'What shall it avail a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?' In modern terms, it is beneath human dignity to lose one's individuality and become a mere cog in the machine. I want every individual to become a full-blooded, full-developed member of the society.⁶³

God forbid that India should ever take to industrialism after the manner of the West. If an entire nation of 300 millions took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world bare like locusts. Unless the capitalists of India help to avert that tragedy by becoming trustees of the welfare of the masses, and by devoting their talents not to amassing wealth for themselves but to the service

of the masses in an altruistic spirit, they will end either by destroying the masses or being destroyed by them.⁶⁴

India, when it begins to exploit other nations—as it must if it become industrialized—will be a curse for other nations, a menace to the world. And why should I think of industrializing India to exploit other nations? Don't you see the tragedy of the situation, viz., that we can find work for our 300 million unemployed, but England can find none for its three million and is faced with a problem that baffles the greatest intellects of England.⁶⁵

Alternative to Industrialization

I do not believe that industrialization is necessary in any case for any country. It is much less so for India. Indeed, I believe that Independent India can only discharge her duty towards a groaning world by adopting a simple but ennobled life by developing her thousands of cottages and living at peace with the world. High thinking is inconsistent with complicated material life based on high speed imposed on us by Mammon worship. All the graces of life are possible only when we learn the art of living nobly. . . .

Whether such plain living is possible for an isolated nation, however large geographically and numerically, in the face of a world armed to the teeth and in the midst of pomp and circumstance is a question open to the doubt of a sceptic. The answer is straight and simple. If plain life is worth living, then the attempt is worth making, even though only an individual or group makes the effort.

State Control

At the same time, I believe that some key industries are necessary. I do not believe in arm-chair or armed socialism. I believe in action according to my belief, without waiting for wholesale conversion. Hence, without having to enumerate key industries, I would have State ownership, where a large number of people have to work together. The ownership of the products of their labour, whether skilled or unskilled, will vest in them through

the State. But as I can conceive such a State only based on non-violence, I would not dispossess moneyed men by force, but would invite their co-operation in the process of conversion to State ownership. There are no *pariahs* of society, whether they are millionaires or paupers. The two are sores of the same disease. And all are men "for a that".⁶⁶

Revival of Rural Industries

In seeking to revive such village industries as are capable of being revived . . . I am trying to do what every lover of village life, everyone who realizes the tragic meaning of the disintegration of villages is doing or trying to do. Why am I turning back the course of modern civilization, when I ask the villager to grind his own meal, eat it whole, including the nourishing bran, or when I ask him to turn his sugarcane into *gur* for his own requirements, if not for sale? Am I turning back the course of modern civilization when I ask the villagers not merely to grow raw produce, but to turn it into marketable products and thereby add a few more pies to their daily income?⁶⁷

The revival of the village is possible only when it is no more exploited. Industrialization on a mass scale will necessarily lead to passive or active exploitation of the villagers as the problems of competition and marketing come in. Therefore we have to concentrate on the village being self-contained, manufacturing mainly for use. Provided this character of the village industry is maintained, there would be no objection to villagers using even the modern machines and tools that they can make and can afford to use. Only, they should not be used as a means of exploitation of others.⁶⁸

Real Planning

I heartily endorse the proposition that any plan which exploits the raw materials of a country and neglects the potentially more powerful man-power is lopsided and can never tend to establish human equality. . . .

Real planning consists in the best utilization of the whole man-power of India and the distribution of the raw products of India in her numerous villages instead of sending them outside and re-buying finished articles at fabulous prices.⁶⁹

50. SOCIALISM

REAL SOCIALISM has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught: 'All land belongs to Gopal, where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of that line and he can therefore unmake it.' Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the State, i.e., the People. That the land today does not belong to the people is too true. But the fault is not in the teaching. It is in us who have not lived up to it.

I have no doubt that we can make as good an approach to it as is possible for any nation, not excluding Russia, and that without violence.⁷⁰

No man should have more land than he needs for dignified sustenance. Who can dispute the fact that the grinding poverty of the masses is due to their having no land that they can call their own?⁷¹

Western Socialism

I have been a sympathetic student of the Western social order and I have discovered that, underlying the fever that fills the soul of the West, there is a restless search for truth. I value that spirit. Let us study our Eastern institutions in that spirit of scientific enquiry and we shall evolve a truer socialism and a truer communism than the world has yet dreamed of. It is surely wrong to presume that Western socialism or communism is the last word on the question of mass poverty.⁷²

Socialism was not born with the discovery of the misuse of capital by capitalists. As I have contended, socialism,

even communism, is explicit in the first verse of *Ishopanishad*. What is true is that when some reformers lost faith in the method of conversion, the technique of what is known as scientific socialism was born. I am engaged in solving the same problem that faces scientific socialists.

It is true, however, that my approach is always and only through unadulterated non-violence. I may fail. If it does, it will be because of my ignorance of the technique of non-violence. I may be a bad exponent of the doctrine in which my faith is daily increasing.⁷³

My Socialism

I have claimed that I was a socialist long before those I know in India had avowed their creed. But my socialism was natural to me and not adopted from any books. It came out of my unshakable belief in non-violence. No man could be actively non-violent and not rise against social injustice, no matter where it occurred. Unfortunately, Western socialists have, so far as I know, believed in the necessity of violence for enforcing socialistic doctrines.

I have always held that social justice, even unto the least and the lowliest, is impossible of attainment by force. I have further believed that it is possible by proper training of the lowliest by non-violent means to secure redress of the wrongs suffered by them. That means non-violent non-co-operation.⁷⁴

Whilst I have the greatest admiration for the self-denial and spirit of sacrifice of our Socialist friends, I have never concealed the sharp difference between their method and mine. They frankly believe in violence and all that is in its bosom. I believe in non-violence through and through. . . .

My socialism means 'even unto this last'. I do not want to rise on the ashes of the blind, the deaf and the dumb. In their (i.e., Indian) socialism, probably these have no place. Their one aim is material progress.

For instance, America aims at having a car for every citizen. I do not. I want freedom for full expression of my personality. I must be free to build a staircase to Sirius if

I want to. That does not mean that I want to do any such thing. Under the other socialism, there is no individual freedom. You own nothing, not even your body.⁷⁵

Equality in Socialism

Socialism is a beautiful word and, so far as I am aware, in socialism all the members of society are equal—none low, none high. In the individual body, the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism.

In it the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and employee are all on the same level. In terms of religion there is no duality in socialism. It is all unity.

Looking at society all the world over, there is nothing but duality or plurality. Unity is conspicuous by its absence. This man is high, that one is low, that is a Hindu, that a Muslim, third a Christian, fourth a Parsi, fifth a Sikh, sixth a Jew. Even among these there are sub-divisions. In the unity of my conception there is perfect unity in the plurality of designs.

In order to reach this state we may not look on things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to socialism. Without changing our life, we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and, hawk-like, seize the game when it comes our way. This is no socialism. The more we treat it as game to be seized, the farther it must recede from us.

The Means

Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one and the first zero will count for ten and every addition will count for ten times the previous number. If, however, the beginner is a zero, in other words, no one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeros will also produce zero value. Time and paper occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste.

This socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means result in an impure end. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employed.

One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach truth. Are not non-violence and truth twins? The answer is an emphatic 'no'. Non-violence is embedded in truth and *vice versa*. Hence has it been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling of words will be different. The value is the same.

This blessed state is unattainable without perfect purity. Harbour impurity of mind or body and you have untruth and violence in you.

Therefore, only truthful, non-violent and pure-hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialistic society in India and the world. To my knowledge there is no country in the world which is purely socialistic. Without the means described above, the existence of such a society is impossible.⁷⁶

The Socialists and Communists say they can do nothing to bring about economic equality today. They will just carry on propaganda in its favour and to that end they believe in generating and accentuating hatred. They say, 'When they get control over the State, they will enforce equality.'

... I claim to be a foremost Communist although I make use of cars and other facilities offered to me by the rich. They have no hold on me and I can shed them at a moment's notice, if the interests of the masses demand it.⁷⁷

By Education

But it must be realized that the reform cannot be rushed. If it is to be brought about by non-violent means, it can only be done by education both of the 'haves' and

the 'have-nots'. The former should be assured that there never will be force used against them. The 'have-nots' must be educated to know that no one can really compel them to do anything against their will, and that they can secure their freedom by learning the art of non-violence, i.e., self-suffering.

If the end in view is to be achieved, the education I have adumbrated has to be commenced now. An atmosphere of mutual respect and trust has to be established as the preliminary step. There can then be no violent conflict between the classes and the masses.⁷⁸

Faith in God

Truth and *ahimsa* must incarnate in socialism. In order that they can, the votary must have a living faith in God. Mere mechanical adherence to truth and *ahimsa* is likely to break down at the critical moment. Hence I have said that Truth is God.

This God is a living Force. Our life is of that Force. That Force resides in but is not the body. He who denies the existence of that great Force denies to himself the use of that inexhaustible Power and thus remains impotent. He is like a rudderless ship which, tossed about here and there, perishes without making any headway. The socialism of such takes them nowhere, what to say of the society in which they live.

If such be the case, does it mean that no socialist believes in God? If there be any, why have they not made any visible progress? Then, again, many godly persons have lived before now; why have they not succeeded in founding a socialistic state?

It is difficult completely to silence these two doubts. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that it has perhaps never occurred to a believing socialist that there is any connection between his socialism and belief in God. It is equally safe to say that godly men as a rule never commended socialism to the masses.

Superstitions have flourished in the world in spite of godly men and women. In Hinduism itself untouchability has, till of late, held undoubted sway.

The fact is that it has always been a matter of strenuous research to know this great Force and its hidden possibilities.

Satyagraha Sure Method

My claim is that in the pursuit of that search lies the discovery of Satyagraha. It is not, however, claimed that all the laws of Satyagraha have been laid down or found. This I do say, fearlessly and firmly, that every worthy object can be achieved by the use of Satyagraha. It is the highest and infallible means, the greatest force. Socialism will not be reached by any other means. Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral.⁷⁹

Nationalization

I believe in the nationalization of key and principal industries as is laid down in the resolution of the Karachi Congress. More than that I cannot at present visualize. Nor do I want all the means of production to be nationalized. Is even Rabindranath Tagore to be nationalized? These are day dreams.⁸⁰

I believe in private enterprise and also in planned production. If you have only State production, men will become moral and intellectual paupers. They will forget their responsibilities. I would therefore allow the capitalist and the zamindar to keep their factory and their land, but I would make them consider themselves trustees of their property.⁸¹

Even without control of the State there can be nationalization. I can start a mill for the benefit of the workers.⁸²

51. A SOCIALIST PATTERN OF SOCIETY

Socialist Order

IF I can convert the country to my point of view, the social order of the future will be based predominantly on the charkha and all it implies. It will include everything that promotes the well-being of the villagers. It will not exclude the industries . . . so long as they do not smother the villages and village life.

I do visualize electricity, ship-building, iron works, machine making and the like existing side by side with village handicrafts. But the order of dependence will be reversed. Hitherto the industrialization has been so planned as to destroy the villages and village crafts. In the State of the future, it will subserve the villages and their crafts.

Non-violent Basis

I do not share the socialist belief that centralization of the necessities of life will conduce to the common welfare, when the centralized industries are planned and owned by the State. The socialistic conception of the West was born in an environment reeking with violence. The motive lying behind the Western type and the Eastern is the same—the greatest welfare of the whole society and the abolition of the hideous inequalities resulting in the existence of millions of ‘have-nots’ and a handful of ‘haves’. I believe that this end can be achieved only when non-violence is accepted by the best mind of the world as the basis on which a just social order is to be constructed. I hold that the coming into power of the proletariat through violence is bound to fail in the end. What is gained by violence must be lost before superior violence.⁸³

Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic or *panchayat* having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the

extent of defending itself against the whole world. It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without.

Thus, ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit. This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbours or from the world. It will be free and voluntary play of mutual forces. Such a society is necessarily highly cultured in which every man and woman knows what he or she wants and what is more, knows that no one should want anything that others cannot have with equal labour.

In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever-widening, never-ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance, but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

Therefore, the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle, but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it. I may be taunted with the retort that this is all Utopian and, therefore, not worth a single thought. If Euclid's point, though incapable of being drawn by human agency, has an imperishable value, my picture has its own for mankind to live. Let India live for this true picture, though never realizable in its completeness. We must have a proper picture of what we want before we can have something approaching it. If there ever is to be a republic of every village in India, then I claim verity for my picture in which the last is equal to the first or, in other words, no one is to be the first and none the last.⁸⁴

Belief in Divinity

This society must naturally be based on truth and non-violence which, in my opinion, are not possible without

a living belief in God, meaning a self-existent, all-knowing Living Force which inheres every other force known to the world, and which depends on none and which will live when all other forces may conceivably perish or cease to act. I am unable to account for my life without belief in this all-embracing living Light.

In this picture every religion has its full and equal place. We are all leaves of a majestic tree whose trunk cannot be shaken off its roots which are deep down in the bowels of the earth. The mightiest wind cannot move it.

In this there is no room for machines that would displace human labour and that would concentrate power in a few hands. Labour has its unique place in a cultured human family. Every machine that helps every individual has a place. But I must confess that I have never sat down to think out what that machine can be. I have thought of Singer's sewing machine. But even that is perfunctory. I do not need it to fill in my picture.⁸⁵

52. THE COMMUNIST CREED

Basic Issue

I DO not believe in short-violent-cuts to success. . . . However much I may sympathize with and admire worthy motives, I am an uncompromising opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest of causes. There is, therefore, really no meeting-ground between the school of violence and myself.

But my creed of non-violence not only does not preclude me but compels me even to associate with anarchists and all those who believe in violence. But that association is always with the sole object of weaning

them from what appears to me to be their error. For experience convinces me that permanent good can never be the outcome of untruth and violence. Even if my belief is a fond delusion, it will be admitted that it is a fascinating delusion.⁸⁶

I must confess that I have not yet been able to fully understand the meaning of Bolshevism. All that I know is that it aims at the abolition of the institution of private property. This is only an application of the ethical ideal of non-possession in the realm of economics and if the people adopted this ideal of their own accord or could be made to accept it by means of peaceful persuasion, there would be nothing like it.

But from what I know of Bolshevism, it not only does not preclude the use of force, but freely sanctions it for the expropriation of private property and maintaining the collective State ownership of the same. And if that is so, I have no hesitation in saying that the Bolshevik regime in its present form cannot last for long. For it is my firm conviction that nothing enduring can be built on violence.

But, be that as it may, there is no questioning the fact that the Bolshevik ideal has behind it the purest sacrifice of countless men and women who have given up their all for its sake, and an ideal that is sanctified by the sacrifices of such master spirits as Lenin cannot go in vain; the noble example of their renunciation will be emblazoned for ever and quicken and purify the ideal as time passes.⁸⁷

Socialism and communism of the West are based on certain conceptions which are fundamentally different from ours. One such conception is their belief in the essential selfishness of human nature. I do not subscribe to it, for I know that the essential difference between man and the brute is that the former can respond to the call of the spirit in him, can rise superior to the passions that he owns in common with the brute and, therefore, superior to selfish-

ness and violence, which belong to the brute nature and not to the immortal spirit of man.

That is the fundamental conception of Hinduism, which has years of penance and austerity at the back of the discovery of this truth. That is why, whilst we have had saints who have worn out their bodies and laid down their lives in order to explore the secrets of the soul, we have had none, as in the West, who laid down their lives in exploring the remotest or the highest regions of the earth. Our socialism or communism should, therefore, be based on non-violence and on harmonious co-operation of labour and capital, landlord and tenant.⁸⁸

Meaning of Communism

Communism of the Russian type, that is communism which is imposed on a people, would be repugnant to India. If communism came without any violence, it would be welcome. For then no property would be held by anybody except on behalf of the people and for the people. A millionaire may have his millions, but he will hold them for the people. The State could take charge of them, whenever they would need them for the common cause.⁸⁹

What does communism mean in the last analysis? It means a classless society—an ideal that is worth striving for. Only I part company with it when force is called to aid for achieving it. We are all born equal, but we have all these centuries resisted the will of God. The idea of inequality, of 'high and low', is an evil, but I do not believe in eradicating evil from the human breast at the point of the bayonet. The human breast does not lend itself to that means.⁹⁰

I cannot accept benevolent or any other dictatorship. Neither will the rich vanish nor will the poor be protected. Some rich men will certainly be killed out and some poor men will be spoon-fed. As a class the rich will remain and the poor also, in spite of dictatorship labelled benevolent. The real remedy is non-violent democracy, otherwise spelt true education of all. The rich should be taught the doctrine of stewardship and the poor that of self-help.⁹¹

Classless society is the ideal, not merely to be aimed at but to be worked for and, in such society, there is no room for classes or communities.⁹²

I call myself a communist also. . . . My communism is not very different from socialism. It is a harmonious blending of the two. Communism as I have understood is a natural corollary of socialism.⁹³

X : TRUSTEESHIP

53. THE GOSPEL OF TRUSTEESHIP

Levelling Up, Down

ECONOMIC EQUALITY is the master key to non-violent independence. Working for economic equality means abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and labour. It means the levelling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation's wealth on the one hand, and the levelling up of the semi-starved naked millions on the other.

A non-violent system of government is clearly an impossibility, so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists. The contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor, labouring class nearby cannot last one day in a free India in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest in the land.

A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good.¹

I adhere to my doctrine of trusteeship in spite of the ridicule that has been poured upon it. It is true that it is difficult to reach. So is non-violence. But we made up our minds in 1920 to negotiate that steep ascent. We have found it worth the effort.²

Non-violent Way

By the non-violent method, we seek not to destroy the capitalist, we seek to destroy capitalism. We invite the capitalist to regard himself as a trustee for those on whom he depends for the making, the retention and the increase

of his capital. Nor need the worker wait for his conversion. If capital is power, so is work. Either power can be used destructively or creatively. Either is dependent on the other. Immediately the worker realizes his strength, he is in a position to become a co-sharer with the capitalist instead of remaining his slave.

If he aims at becoming the sole owner, he will most likely be killing the goose that lays the golden eggs.

Nor need I be afraid of some one else taking my place when I have non-co-operated. For I expect to influence my co-workers so as not to help the wrong-doing of my employer. This kind of education of the mass of workers is no doubt a slow process, but as it is also the surest, it is necessarily the quickest. It can be easily demonstrated that destruction of the capitalist must mean destruction in the end of the worker and as no human being is so bad as to be beyond redemption, no human being is so perfect as to warrant his destroying him whom he wrongly considers to be wholly evil.³

Community Welfare

I am inviting those people who consider themselves as owners today to act as trustees, i.e., owners, not in their own right, but owners in the right of those whom they have exploited.⁴

It has become the fashion these days to say that society cannot be organized or run on non-violent lines. I join issue on that point. In a family, when the father slaps his delinquent child, the latter does not think of retaliating. He obeys his father not because of the deterrent effect of the slap but because of the offended love which he senses behind it. That, in my opinion, is an epitome of the way in which society is or should be governed. What is true of the family must be true of society which is but a larger family.⁵

Supposing I have come by a fair amount of wealth—either by way of legacy, or by means of trade and industry—I must know that all that wealth does not belong

to me; what belongs to me is the right to an honourable livelihood, no better than that enjoyed by millions of others. The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community.

I enunciated this theory when the socialist theory was placed before the country in respect to the possessions held by zamindars and ruling chiefs. They would do away with these privileged classes. I want them to outgrow their greed and sense of possession, and to come down in spite of their wealth to the level of those who earn their bread by labour. The labourer has to realize that the wealthy man is less owner of his wealth than the labourer is owner of *his* own, viz., the power to work.

In Practice

The question how many can be real trustees according to this definition is beside the point. If the theory is true, it is immaterial whether many live up to it or only one man lives up to it. The question is of conviction. If you accept the principle of *ahimsa*, you have to strive to live up to it, no matter whether you succeed or fail. There is nothing in this theory which can be said to be beyond the grasp of intellect, though you may say it is difficult of practice.⁶

I am not ashamed to own that many capitalists are friendly towards me and do not fear me. They know that I desire to end capitalism, almost, if not quite, as much as the most advanced Socialist or even Communist. But our methods differ, our languages differ.

No Make-shift

My theory of 'trusteeship' is no make-shift, certainly no camouflage. I am confident that it will survive all other theories. It has the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it. That possessors of wealth have not acted up to the theory does not prove its falsity; it proves the weakness of the wealthy. No other theory is compatible with non-violence. In the non-violent method the wrong-doer compasses his own end, if he does not undo the wrong. For, either through non-violent

non-co-operation he is made to see the error, or he finds himself completely isolated.⁷

Acquisition of Wealth

Those who own money now, are asked to behave like trustees holding their riches on behalf of the poor. You may say that trusteeship is a legal fiction. But if people meditate over it constantly and try to act up to it, then life on earth would be governed far more by love than it is at present. Absolute trusteeship is an abstraction like Euclid's definition of a point, and is equally unattainable. But if we strive for it, we shall be able to go further in realizing state of equality on earth than by any other method.⁸

It is my conviction that it is possible to acquire riches without consciously doing wrong. For example I may light on a gold mine in my one acre of land. But I accept the proposition that it is better not to desire wealth than to acquire it, and become its trustee. I gave up my own long ago, which should be proof enough of what I would like others to do. But what am I to advise those who are already wealthy or who would not shed the desire for wealth? I can only say to them that they should use their wealth for service.

It is true that generally the rich spend more on themselves than they need. But this can be avoided. Jamnalalji spent far less on himself than men of his own economic status and even than many middle-class men. I have come across innumerable rich persons who are stingy on themselves. For some it is a part of their nature to spend next to nothing on themselves, and they do not think that they acquire merit in so doing.

The same applies to the sons of the wealthy. Personally, I do not believe in inherited riches. The well-to-do should educate and bring up their children so that they may learn how to be independent. The tragedy is that they do not do so. Their children do get some education, they even recite verses in praise of poverty, but they have no compunction about helping themselves to parental wealth.

That being so, I exercise my common sense and advise what is practicable.

Those of us, however, who consider it a duty to adopt poverty and believe in and desire economic equality may not be jealous of the rich, but should exhibit real happiness in our poverty which others may emulate. The sad fact is that those who are thus happy are few and far between.⁹

A trustee has no heir but the public. In a State built on the basis of non-violence, the commission of trustees will be regulated. Princes and zamindars will be on a par with the other men of wealth.¹⁰

The Choice

As for the present owners of wealth, they will have to make their choice between class war and voluntarily converting themselves into trustees of their wealth. They will be allowed to retain the stewardship of their possessions and to use their talent, to increase the wealth, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the nation and, therefore, without exploitation.

The State will regulate the rate of commission which they will get commensurate with the service rendered and its value to society. Their children will inherit the stewardship only if they prove their fitness for it.

Supposing India becomes a free country tomorrow, all the capitalists will have an opportunity of becoming statutory trustees. But such a statute will not be imposed from above. It will have to come from below.

When the people understand the implications of trusteeship and the atmosphere is ripe for it, the people themselves, beginning with gram panchayats, will begin to introduce such statutes. Such a thing coming from below is easy to swallow. Coming from above it is liable to prove a dead weight.¹¹

Zamindars, Kisans

I am quite prepared to say for the sake of argument that the zamindars are guilty of many crimes and of omissions and commissions. But that is no reason for the

peasant and the labourer who are the salt of the earth to copy crime. If salt loses its savour, wherewith can it be salted? . . .

To the landlords I say that, if what is said against you is true, I will warn you that your days are numbered. You can no longer continue as lords and masters. You have a bright future if you become trustees of the poor kisans. I have in mind not trustees in name but in reality. Such trustees will take nothing for themselves that their labour and care do not entitle them to. They then will find that no law will be able to reach them. The kisans will be their friends.¹²

If the zamindars really become the trustees of their zamindari for the sake of the ryots, there never could be an unholy league [between the two]. There is the difficult zamindari question awaiting solution. . . . What one would love to see is proper, impartial and satisfactory understanding between the zamindars, big and small, the ryots and the Governments, so that when the law is passed, it may not be a dead letter nor need force be used against the zamindars or the ryots. Would that all changes, some of which must be radical, take place throughout India without bloodshed and without force!¹³

*Practical Trusteeship Formula**

1. Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one. It gives no quarter to capitalism, but gives the present owning class a chance of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.

2. It does not recognize any right of private ownership of property except so far as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare.

3. It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth.

*This "simple, practical trusteeship formula" was drawn up by Kishorlal Mashruwala and Narahari Parikh and approved, with a few changes, by Gandhiji.

4. Thus under State-regulated trusteeship, an individual will not be free to hold or use his wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interests of society.

5. Just as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum living wage, even so a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that would be allowed to any person in society. The difference between such minimum and maximum incomes should be reasonable and equitable and variable from time to time so much so that the tendency would be towards obliteration of the difference.

6. Under the Gandhian economic order the character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed.¹⁴

54. NON-VIOLENT ECONOMY

Economics, Ethics

I MUST confess that I do not draw a sharp or any distinction between economics and ethics. Economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and, therefore, sinful. Thus the economics that permit one country to prey upon another are immoral. It is sinful to buy and use articles made by sweated labour.¹⁵

The economics that disregard moral and sentimental considerations are like wax works that, being life-like, still lack the life of the living flesh. At every crucial moment these new-fangled economic laws have broken down in practice. And nations or individuals who accept them as guiding maxims must perish.¹⁶

That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values. The extension of the law of non-violence in the domain of economics means nothing less than the introduction of moral values as a factor to be considered in regulating international commerce.¹⁷

Ideal Economy

According to me the economic constitution of India and, for the matter of that, the world should be such that no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words, everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make the two ends meet.

And this ideal can be universally realized only if the means of production of the elementary necessities of life remain in the control of the masses. These should be freely available to all as God's air and water are or ought to be; they should not be made a vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others. This monopolization by any country, nation or group of persons would be unjust. The neglect of this simple principle is the cause of destitution that we witness today not only in this unhappy land but other parts of the world too.¹⁸

True economics never militates against the highest ethical standard, just as all true ethics to be worth its name must at the same time be also good economics. An economics that inculcates Mammon worship, and enables the strong to amass wealth at the expense of the weak, is a false and dismal science. It spells death. True economics, on the other hand, stands for social justice, it promotes the good of all equally including the weakest, and is indispensable for decent life.¹⁹

If we will but cleanse our houses, our palaces and temples of the attributes of wealth and show in them the attributes of morality, we can offer battle to any combinations of hostile forces without having to carry the burden of a heavy militia. Let us seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and the irrevocable promise is that everything will be added unto us. These are real economics. May you and I treasure them and enforce them in our life!²⁰

Minimum Violence

Strictly speaking, no activity and no industry is possible without a certain amount of violence, no matter how little. Even the very process of living is impossible without

a certain amount of violence. What we have to do is to minimize it to the greatest extent possible. Indeed the very word non-violence, a negative word, means that it is an effort to abandon the violence that is inevitable in life. Therefore, whoever believes in *ahimsa* will engage himself in occupations that involve the least possible violence.

Thus, for instance, one cannot conceive of a man believing in non-violence carrying on the occupation of a butcher. Not that a meat-eater cannot be non-violent . . . but even a meat-eater believing in non-violence will not go in for *shikar*, and he will not engage in war or war preparations. Thus there are many activities and occupations which necessarily involve violence and must be eschewed by a non-violent man.

But there is agriculture without which life is impossible, and which does involve a certain amount of violence. The determining factor therefore is—is the occupation founded on violence? But since all activity involves some measure of violence, all we have to do is to minimize the violence involved in it. This is not possible without a heart-belief in non-violence.

Suppose there is a man who does no actual violence, who labours for his bread, but who is always consumed with envy at other people's wealth or prosperity. He is not non-violent. A non-violent occupation is thus that occupation which is fundamentally free from violence and which involves no exploitation or envy of others.

Rural Economics

Now I have no historical proof, but I believe that there was a time in India when village economics were organized on the basis of such non-violent occupations, not on the basis of the rights of man but on the duties of man. Those who engaged themselves in such occupations did earn their living, but their labour contributed to the good of the community. . . .

Body labour was at the core of these occupations and industries, and there was no large-scale machinery. For when a man is content to own only so much land as he can

till with his own labour, he cannot exploit others. Handicrafts exclude exploitation and slavery.

Large-scale machinery concentrates wealth in the hands of one man who lords it over the rest who slave for him. For he may be trying to create ideal conditions for his workmen, but it is none the less exploitation which is a form of violence.

When I say that there was a time when society was based not on exploitation but on justice, I mean to suggest that truth and *ahimsa* were not virtues confined to individuals but were practised by communities. To me virtue ceases to have any value if it is cloistered or possible only for individuals.²¹

55. ECONOMIC EQUALITY

INEQUALITIES in intelligence and even opportunity will last till the end of time. A man living on the banks of a river has any day more opportunity of growing crops than one living in an arid desert. But if inequalities stare us in the face, the essential equality too is not to be missed.²²

My Idea of Society

My idea of society is that while we are born equal, meaning that we have a right to equal opportunity, all have not the same capacity. It is, in the nature of things, impossible. For instance, all cannot have the same height, or colour or degree of intelligence, etc.; therefore, in the nature of things, some will have ability to earn more and others less.

People with talents will have more, and they will utilize their talents for this purpose. If they utilize their talents kindly, they will be performing the work of the State. Such people exist as trustees, on no other terms.

I would allow a man of intellect to earn more, I would not cramp his talent. But the bulk of his greater earnings

must be used for the good of the State, just as the income of all earning sons of the father go to the common family fund. They would have their earnings only as trustees.²³

For I want to bring about an equalization of status. The working classes have all these centuries been isolated and relegated to a lower status. They have been *shoodras*, and the word has been interpreted to mean an inferior status. I want to allow no differentiation between the son of a weaver, of an agriculturist and of a schoolmaster.²⁴

Removal of Disparity

Economic equality of my conception does not mean that everyone will literally have the same amount. It simply means that everybody should have enough for his or her needs. . . . The real meaning of economic equality is "To each according to his need." That is the definition of Marx. If a single man demands as much as a man with wife and four children, that will be a violation of economic equality.

Let no one try to justify the glaring difference between the classes and the masses, the prince and the pauper, by saying that the former need more. That will be idle sophistry and a travesty of my argument.

The contrast between the rich and the poor today is a painful sight. The poor villagers are exploited by . . . their own countrymen—the city-dwellers. They produce the food and go hungry. They produce milk and their children have to go without it. It is disgraceful.

Everyone must have a balanced diet, a decent house to live in, facilities for the education of one's children and adequate medical relief. . . .

Under my plan the State will be there to carry out the will of the people, not to dictate them or force them to do its will. I shall bring about economic equality through non-violence, by converting the people to my point of view by harnessing the forces of love as against hatred. I will not wait till I have converted the whole society to my view, but will straightaway make a beginning with myself. It goes without saying that I cannot hope to bring about economic equality of my conception if I am the owner of

fifty motor cars or even of ten *bighas* of land. For that I have to reduce myself to the level of the poorest of the poor.²⁵

All must have equal opportunity. Given the opportunity, every human being has the same possibility for spiritual growth.²⁶

Accumulation [of capital] by private persons is impossible except through violent means, but accumulation by the State in a non-violent society is not only possible, it is desirable and inevitable. [No man has the] moral right ['to use any material or moral wealth accumulated only through the help or co-operation of other members of society mainly for personal advantage'].²⁷

Today there is gross economic inequality. The basis of socialism is economic equality. There can be no Ramarajya in the present state of iniquitous inequalities in which a few roll in riches and the masses do not get even enough to eat.²⁸

Doctrine of Equal Distribution

We want to organize our national power. This can be done not by adopting the best methods of production only but by the best method of *both* the production and the distribution.²⁹

What India needs is not the concentration of capital in a few hands, but its distribution so as to be within easy reach of the 7½ lakhs of villages that make this continent 1900 miles long and 1500 miles broad.³⁰

My ideal is equal distribution, but so far as I can see, it is not to be realized. I therefore work for equitable distribution.³¹

The real implication of equal distribution is that each man shall have the wherewithal to supply all his natural needs and no more. For example, if one man has a weak digestion and requires only a quarter of a pound of flour for his bread and another needs a pound, both should be in a position to satisfy their wants.

New Social Order

To bring this ideal into being the entire social order has got to be reconstructed. A society based on non-violence cannot nurture any other ideal. We may not perhaps be able to realize the goal, but we must bear it in mind and work unceasingly to near it.

To the same extent as we progress towards our goal we shall find contentment and happiness, and to that extent too shall we have contributed towards the bringing into being of a non-violent society.

It is perfectly possible for an individual to adopt this way of life without having to wait for others to do so. And if an individual can observe a certain rule of conduct, it follows that a group of individuals can do likewise. It is necessary for me to emphasize the fact that no one need wait for anyone else in order to adopt a right course. Men generally hesitate to make a beginning if they feel that the objective cannot be had in its entirety. Such an attitude of mind is in reality a bar to progress.

Through Non-violence

Now let us consider how equal distribution can be brought about through non-violence. The first step towards it for him who has made this ideal part of his being is to bring about the necessary changes in his personal life. He would reduce his wants to a minimum, bearing in mind the poverty of India. His earnings would be free of dishonesty. The desire for speculation would be renounced. His habitation would be in keeping with his new mode of life. There would be self-restraint exercised in every sphere of life. When he has done all that is possible in his own life, then only will he be in a position to preach this ideal among his associates and neighbour.

Indeed, at the root of this doctrine of equal distribution must lie that of the trusteeship of the wealthy for superfluous wealth possessed by them. For according to the doctrine they may not possess a rupee more than their neighbours.

How is this to be brought about? Non-violently? Or should the wealthy be dispossessed of their possessions? To do this we would naturally have to resort to violence. This violent action cannot benefit society. Society will be the poorer, for it will lose the gifts of a man who knows how to accumulate wealth. Therefore the non-violent way is evidently superior. The rich man will be left in possession of his wealth, of which he will use what he reasonably requires for his personal needs and will act as a trustee for the remainder to be used for the society. In this argument, honesty on the part of the trustee is assumed.

Change in Human Nature

As soon as a man looks upon himself as a servant of society, earns for its sake, spends for its benefit, then purity enters into his earnings and there is *ahimsa* in his venture. Moreover, if men's minds turn towards this way of life, there will come about a peaceful revolution in society, and that without any bitterness.

It may be asked whether history at any time records such a change in human nature. Such changes have certainly taken place in individuals. One may not perhaps be able to point to them in a whole society. But this only means that up till now there has never been an experiment on a large scale on non-violence.

Applicability of Ahimsa

Somehow or other the wrong belief has taken possession of us that *ahimsa* is pre-eminently a weapon for individuals and its use should, therefore, be limited to that sphere. In fact this is not the case. *Ahimsa* is definitely an attribute of society. To convince people of this truth is at once my effort and my experiment.

In this age of wonders no one will say that a thing or idea is worthless because it is new. To say it is impossible because it is difficult is again not in consonance with the spirit of the age. Things undreamt of are daily being seen, the impossible is ever becoming possible. We are constantly being astonished these days at the amazing

discoveries in the field of violence. But I maintain that far more undreamt of and seemingly impossible discoveries will be made in the field of non-violence. The history of religion is full of such examples. . . .

If, however, in spite of the utmost effort, the rich do not become guardians of the poor in the true sense of the term and the latter are more and more crushed and die of hunger, what is to be done? In trying to find out the solution of this riddle, I have lighted on non-violent non-co-operation and civil disobedience as the right and infallible means. The rich cannot accumulate wealth without the co-operation of the poor in society.

Man has been conversant with violence from the beginning, for he has inherited this strength from the animal in his nature. It was only when he rose from the state of a quadruped (animal) to that of a biped (man) that the knowledge of the strength of *ahimsa* entered into his soul. This knowledge has grown within him slowly but surely. If this knowledge were to penetrate to and spread amongst the poor, they would become strong and would learn how to free themselves by means of non-violence from the crushing inequalities which have brought them to the verge of starvation.³²

XI : BRAHMACHARYA

56. THE GOSPEL OF BRAHMACHARYA

Self-restraint

HUMAN SOCIETY is a ceaseless growth, an unfolding in terms of spirituality. If so, it must be based on ever-increasing restraint upon the demands of the flesh. Thus, marriage must be considered to be a sacrament imposing discipline upon the partners, restricting them to the physical union only among themselves and for the purpose only of procreation when both the partners desire and are prepared for it.¹

What chiefly distinguishes man from the beast is that man from his age of discretion begins to practise a life of continual self-restraint. God has enabled man to distinguish between his sister, his mother, his daughter and his wife.²

Need for Brahmacharya

A large part of the miseries of today can be avoided if we look at the relations between the sexes in a healthy and pure light, and regard ourselves as trustees for the moral welfare of the future generations.³

Life without *brahmacharya* appears to me to be insipid and animal-like. The brute by nature knows no self-restraint. Man is man because he is capable of, and only in so far as he exercises, self-restraint. What formerly appeared to me to be extravagant praise of *brahmacharya* in our religious books seems now, with increasing clearness every day, to be absolutely proper and founded on experience.⁴

I hold that a life of perfect continence in thought, speech and action is necessary for reaching spiritual perfection. And a nation that does not possess such men is poorer for the want.⁵

Faith in God

I must confess that the observance of the law of continence is impossible without a living faith in God which is living Truth. It is the fashion nowadays to dismiss God altogether and insist on the possibility of reaching the highest kind of life without the necessity of a living faith in a living God. I must confess my inability to drive the truth of the law home to those who have no faith in and no need for a Power infinitely higher than themselves. My own experience has led me to the knowledge that fullest life is impossible without an immovable belief in a living law in obedience to which the whole universe moves.⁶

The living force which we call God can . . . be found if we know and follow His law leading to the discovery of Him in us. But it is self-evident that to find out God's law requires far harder labour. The law may, in one word, be termed *brahmacharya*. The straight way to cultivate *brahmacharya* is Ramanama.⁷

Proper Meaning

The full and proper meaning of *Brahmacharya* is search of Brahman. Brahman pervades every being and can therefore be searched by diving into and realizing the inner self. This realization is impossible without complete control of the senses. *Brahmacharya* thus means control in thought, word and action, of all the senses at all times and in all places.

A man or woman completely practising *Brahmacharya* is absolutely free from passion. Such a one therefore lives nigh unto God, is Godlike. I have no doubt that it is possible to practise such *Brahmacharya* in thought, word and action to the fullest extent.⁸

What is *brahmacharya*? It is the way of life which leads us to Brahma (God). It includes full control over the process of reproduction. The control must be in thought, word and deed. If the thought is not under control, the other two have no value. There is a saying in Hindustani: "He whose heart is pure has the all-purifying waters of the Ganga in his house." For one whose thought is

under control the other is mere child's play. The *brahmachari* of my conception will be healthy and will easily live long. He will not even suffer from so much as a headache. Mental and physical work will not cause fatigue. He is ever bright, never slothful. Outward neatness will be an exact reflection of the inner. He will exhibit all the attributes of the steadfast one described in the Gita. It need cause no worry if not one person is met with answering the description.

Is it strange that one who is able completely to conserve and sublimate the vital fluid which has the potentiality of creating human beings should exhibit all the attributes described above? Who can measure the creative strength of such sublimation, one drop of which has the potentiality of bringing into being a human life?⁹

Definition

So long as thought is not under complete control of the will, *brahmacharya* in its fulness is absent. Involuntary thought is an affection of the mind; and curbing of thought, therefore, means curbing of the mind which is more difficult to curb than the wind. Nevertheless the existence of God within makes even control of the mind possible. Let no one think that it is impossible because it is difficult. It is the highest goal, and it is no wonder that the highest effort should be necessary to attain it.¹⁰

The Mind

Brahmacharya, like all other observances, must be observed in thought, word and deed. We are told in the Gita, and experience will corroborate the statement, that the foolish man, who appears to control his body, but is nursing evil thoughts in his mind, makes a vain effort. It may be harmful to suppress the body, if the mind is at the same time allowed to go astray. Where the mind wanders, the body must follow sooner or later. . . .

. . . It is one thing to allow the mind to harbour impure thoughts; it is a different thing altogether if it strays

among them in spite of ourselves. Victory will be ours in the end, if we non-co-operate with the mind in its evil wanderings.¹¹

• *Inner Condition*

Brahmacharya is a mental condition. The outward behaviour of a man is at once the sign and proof of the inner state. He who has killed the sexual urge in him will never be guilty of it in any shape or form. However attractive a woman may be, her attraction will produce no effect on the man without the urge. The same rule applies to woman. . . .

Brahmacharya is not a virtue that can be cultivated by outward restraints. He who runs away from a necessary contact with a woman does not understand the full meaning of *brahmacharya*. . . .

The true *brahmachari* will shun false restraints. He must create his own fences according to his limitations, breaking them down when he feels that they are unnecessary. The first thing is to know what true *brahmacharya* is, then to realize its value and lastly to try to cultivate this priceless virtue. I hold that true service of the country demands this observance.¹²

Control of Senses

. . . Mere control of animal passion has been thought to be tantamount to observing *brahmacharya*. I feel that this conception is incomplete and wrong. *Brahmacharya* means control of all the organs of sense. He who attempts to control only one organ and allows all others free play is bound to find his effort futile.

To hear suggestive stories with the ears, to see suggestive sights with the eyes, to taste stimulating food with the tongue, to touch exciting things with the hands, and then, at the same time, expect to control the only remaining organ is like putting one's hand in the fire, and expecting to escape being burnt. He, therefore, who

is resolved to control the one must be likewise determined to control the rest.

I have always felt that much harm has been done by the narrow definition of *brahmacharya*. If we practise simultaneous control in all directions, the attempt will be scientific and possible of success. Perhaps the palate is the chief sinner.¹³

The Sthitaprajna

What . . . are the characteristics of a *Sthitaprajna*? He is one who withdraws his senses from the objects of the senses behind the shield of the spirit, as a tortoise does its limbs under its shell. A man whose wisdom is not steady is liable to be betrayed into anger, evil thoughts or abuse. On the contrary, the man with steady wisdom will remain equally unaffected by adulation or abuse. He will realize that abuse fouls only the tongue that utters it, never the person against whom it is hurled. A man of steady wisdom will, therefore, never wish ill to anyone, but will pray even for his enemy with his last breath.¹⁴

My Brahmacharya

For me the observance of even bodily *brahmacharya* has been full of difficulties. Today I may say that I feel myself fairly safe, but I have yet to achieve complete mastery over thought, which is so essential. Not that the will or effort is lacking, but it is yet a problem to me wherefrom undesirable thoughts spring their insidious invasions.

I have no doubt that there is a key to lock out undesirable thoughts, but every one has to find it out for himself. Saints and seers have left their experiences for us, but they have given us no infallible and universal prescription. For, perfection or freedom from error comes only from grace, and so seekers after God have left us *mantras* such as Ramanama, hallowed by their own austerities and charged with their purity.

Without an unreserved surrender to His grace, complete mastery over thought is impossible. This is the

teaching of every great book of religion, and I am realizing the truth of it every moment of my striving after that perfect *brahmacharya*.¹⁵

I have practised *brahmacharya* for over thirty years with considerable success though living in the midst of activities. After the decision to lead the life of a *brahmachari*, there was little change in my outward practice, except with my wife. . . .

My *brahmacharya* was not derived from books. I evolved my own rules for my guidance and that of those who, at my invitation, had joined me in the experiment. If I have not followed the prescribed restrictions, much less have I accepted the description found even in religious literature of woman as the source of all evil and temptations. Owing as I do all the good there may be in me to my mother, I have looked upon woman, never as an object for satisfaction of sexual desire, but always with the veneration due to my own mother. Man is the tempter and aggressor. It is not woman whose touch defiles man, but he is often himself too impure to touch her. . . .

I am experimenting. I have never claimed to have been a perfect *brahmachari* of my definition. I have not acquired that control over my thoughts that I need for my researches in non-violence. If my non-violence is to be contagious and infectious, I must acquire greater control over my thoughts.¹⁶

From that day when I began *brahmacharya*, our freedom began. My wife became a free woman, free from my authority as her lord and master, and I became free from the slavery to my own appetite which she had to satisfy. No other woman had any attraction for me in the same sense that my wife had. I was too loyal to her as husband and too loyal to the vow I had taken before my mother to be slave to any other woman. But the manner in which my *brahmacharya* came to me irresistibly drew me to woman as the mother of man. She became too sacred for sexual love. And so every woman at once became sister or daughter to me.¹⁷

If I were sexually attracted towards women, I have courage enough, even at this time of life, to become a polygamist. I do not believe in free love—secret or open. Free, open love I have looked upon as dog's love. Secret love is, besides, cowardly.¹⁸

57. THE MARRIAGE IDEAL

THE IDEAL that marriage aims at is that of spiritual union through the physical. The human love that it incarnates is intended to serve as a stepping-stone to divine or universal love.¹⁹

Absolute renunciation, absolute *brahmacharya*, is the ideal state. If you dare not think of it, marry by all means, but even then live a life of self-control.²⁰

The ideal of absolute *brahmacharya* or of married *brahmacharya* is for those who aspire to a spiritual or higher life; it is the *sine qua non* of such life.²¹

Marriage is a natural thing in life, and to consider it derogatory in any sense is wholly wrong. . . . The ideal is to look upon marriage as a sacrament, and therefore, to lead a life of self-restraint in the married estate.²²

Marriage for the satisfaction of sexual appetite is no marriage. It is *vyabhichara*—concupiscence.²³

Manu has described the first child as *dharmaja*—born out of a sense of duty, and children born after the first as *kamaja*—carnally born. That gives in a nutshell the law of sexual relations. And what is God but the Law? And to obey God is to perform the Law.²⁴

Sexual intercourse for the purpose of carnal satisfaction is reversion to animality, and it should, therefore, be man's endeavour to rise above it. But failure to do so as between husband and wife cannot be regarded as a sin or a matter of obloquy. Millions in this world eat for the satisfaction of their palate; similarly, millions of the hus-

bands and wives indulge in the sexual act for their carnal satisfaction and will continue to do so and also pay the inexorable penalty in the shape of numberless ills with which nature visits all violations of its order.²⁵

Undeclared love between husband and wife takes one nearer God than any other love. When sex is mixed with the undeclared love, it takes one away from one's Maker. Hence, if there be no sex consciousness and sexual contact, it is a question whether there is any occasion for marriage.²⁶

Aim of Marriage

Those marriages which are undertaken for the sake of joint service carry their own blessings. Those entered upon for self-satisfaction are wholly unworthy of any.²⁷

Rightly speaking, the true purpose of marriage should be and is intimate friendship and companionship between man and woman. There is in it no room for sexual satisfaction. That marriage is no marriage which takes place for the satisfaction of the sex desire. That satisfaction is a denial of true friendship.²⁸

I know of English marriages undertaken for the sake of companionship and mutual service. If a reference to my own married life is not considered irrelevant, I may say that my wife and I tasted the real bliss of married life when we renounced sexual contact, and that in the heyday of youth. It was then that our companionship blossomed and both of us were enabled to render real service to India and humanity in general. . . . Indeed, this self-denial was born out of our great desire for service.

Of course, innumerable marriages take place in the natural course of events and such will continue. The physical side of married life is given pre-eminence in these.

Innumerable persons eat in order to satisfy the palate, but such indulgence does not, therefore, become one's duty. Very few eat to live, but they are the ones who really know the law of eating. Similarly, those only really marry who marry in order to experience the purity and

sanctity of the marriage tie and thereby realize the divinity within.²⁹

Connubial Relations

The wife is not the husband's bonds slave, but his companion and his help-mate, and an equal partner in all his joys and sorrows—as free as the husband to choose her own path.³⁰

For me, the married state is as much a state of discipline as any other. Life is duty, a probation. Married life is intended to promote mutual good, both here and hereafter. It is meant also to serve humanity.

When one partner breaks the law of discipline, the right accrues to the other of breaking the bond. The breach here is moral and not physical. It precludes divorce. The wife or the husband separates but to serve the end for which they have united.

Hinduism regards each as absolute equal of the other. No doubt a different practice has grown up, no one knows since when. But we have many other evils crept into it. This, however, I do know—that Hinduism leaves the individual absolutely free to do what he or she likes for the sake of self-realization for which and which alone he or she is born.³¹

My ideal of a wife is Sita and of a husband Rama. But Sita was no slave of Rama. Or each was slave of the other. Rama is ever considerate to Sita.³²

You will guard your wife's honour and be not her master, but her true friend. You will hold her body and her soul as sacred as I trust she will hold your body and your soul. To that end you will have to live a life of prayerful toil, and simplicity and self-restraint. Let not either of you regard another as the object of his or her lust.³³

I admit that between husband and wife there should be no secrets from one another. I hold that husband and wife merge in each other. They are one in two or two in one.³⁴

Forced Marriage

It is wholly wrong of parents to force marriage on their daughters. It is also wrong to keep their daughters unfit for earning their living. No father has a right to turn a daughter out on to the streets for refusal to marry.³⁵

Civil Marriage

I do not believe in them [civil marriages], but I welcome the institution of civil marriage as a much-needed reform for the sake of reform.³⁶

58. CHILDREN

IF I am to identify myself with the grief of the least in India, aye, if I have the power, the least in the world, let me identify myself with the sins of the little ones who are under my care. And so doing in all humility, I hope some day to see God—Truth—face to face.³⁷

Character

Children inherit the qualities of their parents, no less than their physical features. Environment does play an important part, but the original capital on which a child starts life is inherited from its ancestors. I have always seen children successfully surmounting the effect of evil inheritance. That is due to purity being an inherent attribute of the soul.³⁸

Children wrapped up in cotton wool are not always proof against all temptation or contamination.³⁹

The real property that a parent can transmit to all equally is his or her character and educational facilities. Parents should seek to make their sons and daughters self-reliant, well able to earn an honest livelihood by the sweat of the brow.⁴⁰

Lesson from Children

It is perfectly true, I must admit it in all humility, that however indifferently it may be, I endeavour to represent

love in every fibre of my being. I am impatient to realize the presence of my Maker, who to me embodies Truth, and, in the early part of my career, I discovered that, if I was to realize Truth, I must obey, even at the cost of my life, the law of Love. And having been blessed with children, I discovered that the law of Love could be best understood and learned through little children.

I believe implicitly that the child is not born mischievous in the bad sense of the term. If parents would behave themselves whilst the child is growing, before it is born and after, it is a well-known fact that the child would instinctively obey the law of Truth and law of Love. And when I understood this lesson in the early part of my life, I began a gradual but distinct change in life. . . .

And believe me, from my experience of hundreds, I was going to say thousands, of children, I know that they have perhaps a finer sense of honour than you and I have. The greatest lessons in life, if we would but stop and humble ourselves, we would learn not from grown-up learned men, but from the so-called ignorant children.

Jesus never uttered a loftier or a grander truth than when he said that wisdom cometh out of the mouths of babes. I believe it. I have noticed it in my own experience that, if we would approach babes in humility and innocence, we would learn wisdom from them. . . .

If we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with children; and if they will grow up in their natural innocence, we won't have to struggle, we won't have to pass fruitless idle resolutions. But we shall go from love to love and peace to peace, until at last all the corners of the world are covered with that peace and love for which, consciously or unconsciously, the whole world is hungering.⁴¹

59. BIRTH-CONTROL

Function of Generation

I THINK it is the height of ignorance to believe that the sexual act is an independent function, necessary like sleeping or eating. The world depends for its existence on the act of generation, and as the world is the playground of God and a reflection of His glory, the act of generation should be controlled for the growth of the world. He who realizes this will control his lust at any cost, equip himself with the knowledge necessary for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of his progeny, and give the benefit of that knowledge to posterity.⁴²

The union is meant not for pleasure, but for bringing forth progeny. And union is a crime when the desire for progeny is absent.⁴³

Once the idea that the only and grand function of the sexual organ is generation possesses man and woman, union for any other purpose they will hold as criminal waste of the vital fluid and the consequent excitement caused to man and woman as an equally criminal waste of energy.⁴⁴

It is dinned into one's ears that gratification of the sex urge is a solemn obligation like the obligation of discharging debts lawfully incurred, and that not to do so would involve the penalty of intellectual decay. This sex urge has been isolated from the desire for progeny and it is said by the protagonists of the use of contraceptives that conception is an accident to be prevented except when the parties desire to have children. I venture to suggest that this is a most dangerous doctrine to preach.

Sex urge is a fine and noble thing. There is nothing to be ashamed of in it. But it is meant only for the act of creation. Any other use of it is a sin against God and humanity.⁴⁵

Artistic Approach

Man is undoubtedly an artist and creator. Undoubtedly, he must have beauty and, therefore, colour. His artistic and creative nature at its best taught him to discriminate, and to know that any conglomeration of colours was no mark of beauty, nor every sense of enjoyment good in itself. His eye for art taught man to seek enjoyment in usefulness.

Thus, he learnt at an early stage of his evolution that he was to eat not for its own sake, as some of us still do, but he should eat to enable him to live. At a later stage, he learnt further that there was neither beauty nor joy in living for its own sake, but that he must live to serve his fellow creatures and through them his Maker.

Similarly, when he pondered over the phenomenon of the pleasurableness of sexual union, he discovered that, like every other organ of sense, this one of generation had its use and abuse. And he saw that its true function, its right use, was to restrict it to generation. Any other use he saw was ugly, and he saw further that it was fraught with very serious consequences, as well to the individual as to the race.⁴⁶

Need for Birth-control

There can be no two opinions about the necessity of birth-control. But the only method handed down from ages past is self-control or *brahmacharya*. It is an infallible, sovereign remedy doing good to those who practise it. And medical men will earn the gratitude of mankind if, instead of devising artificial means of birth-control, they will find out the means of self-control. . . .

Artificial methods are like putting a premium upon vice. They make man and woman reckless. And the respectability that is being given to the methods must hasten the dissolution of the restraints that public opinion puts upon one. Adoption of artificial methods must result in imbecility and nervous prostration. The remedy will be found to be worse than the disease.

It is wrong and immoral to seek to escape the consequences of one's acts. It is good for a person who overeats to have an ache and a fast. It is bad for him to indulge his appetite and then escape the consequence by taking tonics or other medicine. It is still worse for a person to indulge in his animal passions and escape the consequences of his acts. Nature is relentless and will have full revenge for any such violation of her laws. Moral results can only be produced by moral restraints. All other restraints defeat the very purpose for which they are intended.⁴⁷

Over-population

If it is contended that birth-control is necessary for the nation because of over-population, I dispute the proposition. It has never been proved. In my opinion, by a proper land system, better agriculture and a supplementary industry, this country is capable of supporting twice as many people as there are in it today.⁴⁸

The bogey of increasing birth-rate is not a new thing. It has been often trotted out. Increase in population is not and ought not to be regarded as a calamity to be avoided. Its regulation or restriction by artificial methods is a calamity of the first grade, whether we know it or not. It is bound to degrade the race if it becomes universal, which, thank God, it is never likely to be. Pestilence, wars and famines are cursed antidotes against cursed lust which is responsible for unwanted children. If we would avoid this three-fold curse, we would avoid too the curse of unwanted children by the sovereign remedy of self-control. The evil consequences of artificial methods are being seen by discerning men even now. Without, however, encroaching upon the moral domain, let me say that propagation of the race rabbit-wise must undoubtedly be stopped; but not so as to bring greater evils in its train. It should be stopped by methods which in themselves ennoble the race. In other words, it is all a matter of proper education which would embrace every department of life; and dealing with one curse will take in its orbit all the others. A way is not to be avoided because it is upward and therefore uphill.

Man's upward progress means ever-increasing difficulty, which is to be welcomed.⁴⁹

Man must choose either of the two courses, the upward or the downward; but as he has the brute in him, he will more easily choose the downward course than the upward, especially when the downward course is presented to him in a beautiful garb. Man easily capitulates when sin is presented in the garb of virtue, and that is what Marie Stopes and others are doing.⁵⁰

I am afraid that advocates of birth-control take it for granted that indulgence in animal passion is a necessity of life and in itself a desirable thing. The solicitude shown for the fair sex is most pathetic. In my opinion, it is an insult to the fair sex to put up her case in support of birth-control by artificial methods. As it is, man has sufficiently degraded her for his lust, and artificial methods, no matter how well-meaning the advocates may be, will still further degrade her.

I urge the advocates of artificial methods to consider the consequences. Any large use of the methods is likely to result in the dissolution of the marriage bond and in free love. If man may indulge in animal passion for the sake of it, what is he to do whilst he is, say, away from his home for any length of time, or when he is engaged as a soldier in a protracted war, or when he is widowed, or when his wife is too ill to permit him the indulgence without injury to her health, notwithstanding the use of artificial methods?⁵¹

Birth-control to me is a dismal abyss. It amounts to playing with unknown forces. Assuming that birth-control by artificial aids is justifiable under certain conditions, it seems to be utterly impracticable of application among the millions. It seems to me to be easier to induce them to practise self-control than control by contraceptives.

This little globe of ours is not a toy of yesterday. It has not suffered from the weight of over-population through its age of countless millions. How can it be that the truth has suddenly dawned upon some people that it is

in danger of perishing of shortage of food unless the birth-rate is checked through the use of contraceptives?⁵²

Greater Sin

It is a sin to bring forth unwanted children, but I think it is a greater sin to avoid the consequences of one's own action. It simply unmans man.⁵³

God has blessed man with seed that has the highest potency and woman with a field richer than the richest earth to be found anywhere on this globe. Surely it is criminal folly for man to allow his most precious possession to run to waste. He must guard it with a care greater than he will bestow upon the richest pearls in his possession.

And so is a woman guilty of criminal folly who will receive the seed in her life-producing field with the deliberate intention of letting it run to waste. Both he and she will be judged guilty of misuse of the talents given to them and they will be dispossessed of what they have been given.⁵⁴

I suggest that it is cowardly to refuse to face the consequences of one's acts. Persons who use contraceptives will never learn the virtue of self-restraint. They will not need it. Self-indulgence with contraceptives may prevent the coming of children but will sap the vitality of both men and women—perhaps, more of men than of women. It is unmanly to refuse battle with the devil.⁵⁵

Social Vice

I know what havoc secret vice has played among school boys and school girls. The introduction of contraceptives under the name of science and the *imprimatur* of known leaders of society has intensified the complication and made the task of reformers who work for purity of social life well-nigh impossible. . . .⁵⁶

Insult to Womanhood

I know that there are modern women who advocate these methods. But I have little doubt that the vast

majority of women will reject them as inconsistent with their dignity. If man means well by her, let him exercise control over himself. It is not she who tempts. In reality, man being the aggressor is the real culprit and the tempter.⁵⁷

I take it that the wisest among the protagonists of contraceptives restrict their use to married women who desire to satisfy their and their husband's sexual appetite without wanting children. I hold this desire as unnatural in the human species and its satisfaction detrimental to the spiritual progress of the human family.⁵⁸

To ask India's women to take to contraceptives is, to say the least, putting the cart before the horse. The first thing is to free her from mental slavery, to teach her the sacredness of her body, and to teach her the dignity of national service and the service of humanity.⁵⁹

Contraceptives are an insult to womanhood. The difference between a prostitute and a woman using contraceptives is only this that the former sells her body to several men, the latter sells it to one man. Man has no right to touch his wife so long as she does not wish to have a child, and the woman should have the will-power to resist even her own husband.⁶⁰

It is the philanthropic motive that no doubt impels many birth-control reformers to a whirlwind campaign in favour of the use of contraceptives. I invite them to contemplate the ruinous consequences of their misplaced philanthropy. Those whom they want to reach will never use them in any appreciable numbers. Those who ought not to use them will, without doubt, use them to the undoing of themselves and their partners. This would not matter in the least if the use of contraceptives was incontestably proved to be right physically and morally.⁶¹

Abstinence

Every husband and wife can make the fixed resolve never to share the same room or the same bed at night and to avoid sexual contact except for the one purpose for which it is intended for both man and beast. The beast observes the law invariably. Man, having got the

choice, has grievously erred in making wrong choice. . . . Both man and woman should know that abstention from satisfaction of sexual appetite results not in disease but in health and vigour, provided the mind co-operates with the body.⁶²

Courage to Say 'No'

Women should have to resist their husbands. If contraceptives are resorted to, frightful results will follow. Men and women will be living for sex alone. They will become soft-brained, unhinged, in fact, mental and moral wrecks.⁶³

I have felt that, during the years still left to me, if I can drive home to women's minds the truth that they are free, we shall have no birth-control problem in India. If they will only learn to say 'no' to their husbands when they approach them carnally . . . all will be well. . . . The real problem is that they do not want to resist them. It boils down to education. I want woman to learn the primary right of resistance. She thinks now that she has not got it.⁶⁴

I do not believe that woman is prey to sexual desire to the same extent as man. It is easier for her than for man to exercise self-restraint.⁶⁵

Self-control

If we begin to believe that indulgence in animal passion is necessary, harmless and sinless, we shall want to give reins to it and shall be powerless to resist it. Whereas if we educate ourselves to believe that such indulgence is harmful, sinful, unnecessary, and can be controlled, we shall discover that self-restraint is perfectly possible.⁶⁶

My quarrel with the advocates of contraceptives lies in their taking it for granted that ordinary mortals cannot exercise self-control. Some of them even go so far as to say that even if they can, they ought not to do so. To them, no matter how eminent they may be in their own spheres, I say, in all humility but with utmost confidence, that they are talking without experience of the possibilities of

self-control. They have no *right* to limit the capacity of the human soul.

And my plea, based on positive experience, is that even as truth and *ahimsa* are not merely for the chosen few but for the whole of humanity, to be practised in daily life, so exactly is self-control not merely for a few 'Mahatmas', but for the whole of humanity. And even as, because many people will be untruthful and violent, humanity may not lower its standard, so also, though many, even the majority, may not respond to the message of self-control, we may not lower our standard.⁶⁷

Sterilization

I consider it inhuman to impose sterilization law on the people. But in cases of individuals with chronic diseases, it is desirable to have them sterilized if they are agreeable to it. Sterilization is a sort of contraceptive and though I am against the use of contraceptive in case of women, I do not mind voluntary sterilization in case of man, since he is the aggressor.⁶⁸

60. WOMAN'S STATUS AND ROLE IN SOCIETY

OF ALL the evils for which man has made himself responsible, none is so degrading, so shocking or so brutal as his abuse of the better half of humanity to me, the female sex, not the weaker sex. It is the nobler of the two, for it is even today the embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering, humility, faith and knowledge.⁶⁹

Woman must cease to consider herself the object of man's lust. The remedy is more in her hands than man's. She must refuse to adorn herself for men, including her husband, if she will be an equal partner with man. I cannot imagine Sita even wasting a single moment on pleasing Rama by physical charms.⁷⁰

If I was born a woman, I would rise in rebellion against any pretension on the part of man that woman is born to be his plaything. I have mentally become a woman in order to steal into her heart. I could not steal into my wife's heart until I decided to treat her differently than I used to do, and so I restored to her all her rights by dispossessing myself of all my so-called rights as her husband. And you see her today as simple as myself.

You find no necklaces, no fineries on her. I want you to be like that. Refuse to be the slaves of your own whims and fancies, and the slaves of men. Refuse to decorate yourselves, and don't go in for scents and lavender waters; if you [women] want to give out the proper scent, it must come out of your heart, and then you will captivate not man, but humanity. It is your birth-right. Man is born of woman, he is flesh of her flesh and bone of her bone. Come to your own and deliver your message again.⁷¹

Not Weaker Sex

To call woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then, indeed, is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her man could not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with woman. . . . Who can make a more effective appeal to the heart than woman?⁷²

Had not man in his blind selfishness crushed woman's soul as he has done or had she not succumbed to 'the enjoyments', she would have given the world an exhibition of the infinite strength that is latent in her. The world shall see it in all its wonder and glory when woman has secured an equal opportunity for herself with man and fully developed her powers of mutual aid and combination.⁷³

Woman, I hold, is the personification of self-sacrifice, but unfortunately today she does not realize what a tremendous advantage she has over man. As Tolstoy used

to say, they are labouring under the hypnotic influence of man. If they would realize the strength of non-violence they would not consent to be called the weaker sex.⁷⁴

Perversion of Place

Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in very minutest detail in the activities of man and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him.

She is entitled to a supreme place in her own sphere of activity as man is in his. This ought to be the natural condition of things and not as a result only of learning to read and write.

By sheer force of a vicious custom, even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women which they do not deserve and ought not to have. Many of our movements stop half way because of the condition of our women.⁷⁵

Man the law-giver will have to pay a dreadful penalty for the degradation he has imposed upon the so-called weaker sex. When woman, freed from man's snares, rises to the full height and rebels against man's legislation and institutions designed by him, her rebellion, no doubt non-violent, will be none the less effective.⁷⁶

Woman has circumvented man in a variety of ways in her unconsciously subtle ways, as man has vainly and equally unconsciously struggled to thwart woman in gaining ascendancy over him. The result is a stalemate. Thus viewed, it is a serious problem the enlightened daughters of Bharat Mata are called upon to solve. They may not ape the manner of the West, which may be suited to its environment. They must apply methods suited to the Indian genius and Indian environment. Theirs must be the strong, controlling, purifying, steadying hand, conserving what is best in our culture and unhesitatingly rejecting what is base and degrading. This is the work of Sitas, Draupadis, Savitris and Damayantis, not of amazons and prudes.⁷⁷

Man has regarded woman as his tool. She has learnt to be his tool, and in the end found it easy and pleasurable to be such, because when one drags another in his fall the descent is easy.⁷⁸

I hold that the right education in this country is to teach woman the art of saying 'no' even to her husband, to teach her that it is no part of her duty to become a mere tool or a doll in her husband's hands. She has rights as well as duties.⁷⁹

Right Education

I believe in the proper education of woman. But I do believe that woman will not make her contribution to the world by mimicking or running a race with men. She can run the race, but she will not rise to the great heights she is capable of by mimicking man. She has to be the complement of man.⁸⁰

Self-protection

Those who see in Sita a willing slave under Rama do not realize the loftiness of either her independence or Rama's consideration for her in everything. Sita was no helpless, weak woman incapable of protecting herself or her honour.⁸¹

I have a fear that the modern girl loves to be Juliet to half a dozen Romeos. She loves adventure. . . . The modern girl dresses not to protect herself from wind, rain and sun, but to attract attention. She improves upon nature by painting herself and looking extraordinary. The non-violent way is not for such girls.⁸²

Women may not look for protection to men. They must rely on their own strength and purity of character and on God as did Draupadi of old.⁸³

Rightful Place

Women are special custodians of all that is pure and religious in life. Conservative by nature, if they are slow to shed superstitious habits, they are also slow to give up all that is pure and noble in life.⁸⁴

I do not envisage the wife, as a rule, following an avocation independently of her husband. The care of the children, and the upkeep of the household are quite enough to fully engage all her energy.

In a well-ordered society, the additional burden of maintaining the family ought not to fall on her. The man should look to the maintenance of the family, the woman to house-hold management, the two thus supplementing and complementing each other's labours.

Nor do I see in this any invasion of woman's rights or suppression of her freedom. . . . The epithets used in our literature to describe a wife are *Ardhangana*, 'the better half', and *Sahadharmini*, 'the helpmate'. The husband addressing the wife as *devi* or goddess does not show any disparagement.

. . . The woman who knows and fulfils her duty realizes her dignified status. She is the queen, not the slave, of the household over which she presides.⁸⁵

But somehow or other man has dominated woman from ages past, and so woman has developed an inferiority complex. She has believed in the truth of man's interested teaching that she is inferior to him. But the seers among men have recognized her equal status.

Nevertheless there is no doubt that at some point there is bifurcation. Whilst both are fundamentally one, it is also equally true that in the form there is a vital difference between the two. Hence the vocations of the two must also be different.⁸⁶

Woman and Ahimsa

I do believe that it is woman's mission to exhibit *ahimsa* at its highest and best. . . . For woman is more fitted than man to make explorations and take bolder action in *ahimsa*. . . . For the courage of self-sacrifice woman is any-day superior to man, as I believe man is to woman for the courage of the brute.⁸⁷

My own opinion is that, just as fundamentally man and woman are one, their problem must be one in essence. The soul in both is the same. The two live the same life,

have the same feelings. Each is a complement of the other. The one cannot live without the other's active help.⁸⁸

I have suggested . . . that woman is the incarnation of *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering. Who but woman, the mother of man, shows this capacity in the largest measure? She shows it as she carries the infant and feeds it during nine months and derives joy in the suffering involved. What can beat the suffering caused by the pangs of labour? But she forgets them in the joy of creation.

Who, again, suffers daily so that her babe may wax from day to day? Let her transfer that love to the whole of humanity, let her forget that she ever was or can be the object of man's lust. And she will occupy her proud position by the side of man as his mother, maker and silent leader. It is given to her to teach the art of peace to the warring world thirsting for that nectar.⁸⁹

Special Mission

The duty of motherhood, which the vast majority of women will always undertake, requires qualities which man need not possess. She is passive, he is active. She is essentially mistress of the house. He is the breadwinner, she is the keeper and distributor of the bread. She is the care-taker in every sense of the term. The art of bringing up the infants of the race is her special and sole prerogative. Without her care the race must become extinct.

In my opinion, it is degrading both for man and woman that woman should be called upon or induced to forsake hearth and shoulder the rifle for the protection of that hearth. It is a reversion to barbarity and the beginning of the end. In trying to ride the horse that man rides, she brings herself and him down.

The sin will be on man's head for tempting or compelling his companion to desert her special calling. There is as much bravery in keeping one's home in good order and condition as there is in defending it against attack from without. . . .

My contribution to the great problem lies in my presenting for acceptance truth and *ahimsa* in every walk of life, whether for individuals or nations. I have hugged the hope that in this woman will be the unquestioned leader and, having thus found her place in human evolution, she will shed her inferiority complex.

If she is able to do this successfully, she must resolutely refuse to believe in the modern teaching that everything is determined and regulated by the sex impulse. . . .⁹⁰

Woman is naturally more self-suffering. Non-violence therefore comes more easily to her.⁹¹

I expect love and toleration in a higher degree from women than from men. I wonder where they are drifting and what women will or can teach their children if their hearts are permeated with hate.⁹²

Equality of Sexes

I am uncompromising in the matter of women's rights. In my opinion, she should labour under no legal disability not suffered by men. I should treat the daughters and sons on a footing of perfect equality.⁹³

Equality of sexes does not mean equality of occupations. There may be no legal bar against a woman hunting or wielding a lance. But she instinctively recoils from a function that belongs to man. Nature has created sexes as complements of each other. Their functions are defined as are their forms.⁹⁴

Legislation has been mostly the handiwork of men; and man has not always been fair and discriminate in performing that self-appointed task. The largest part of our effort in promoting the regeneration of women should be directed towards removing those blemishes which are represented in our Shastras as the necessary and ingrained characteristics of women. Who will attempt this and how?

In my humble opinion, in order to make the attempt, we will have to produce women, pure, firm and

self-controlled as Sita, Damayanti and Draupadi. If we do produce them, such modern sisters will receive the same homage from Hindu Society as is being paid to their prototypes of yore. Their words will have the same authority as the Shastras. We will feel ashamed of the stray reflections on them in our Smritis, and will soon forget them. Such revolutions have occurred in Hinduism in the past, and will still take place in the future, leading to the stability of our faith.⁹⁵

I make no distinction between man and woman. Woman should feel just as independent as men. Bravery is not man's monopoly.⁹⁶

Today few women take part in politics and most of these do not do independent thinking. They are content to carry out their parents' or their husbands' behests. Realizing their dependence, they cry out for women's rights. Instead of doing this, however, women workers should enrol women as voters, impart or have imparted to them practical education, teach them to think independently, release them from the chains of caste that bind them, so as to bring about a change in them which will compel men to realize woman's strength and capacity for sacrifice and give her places of honour.⁹⁷

There is no occasion for women to consider themselves subordinate or inferior to men. Languages proclaim that woman is half of man and, by parity of reasoning, man is half of woman. They are not two separate entities, but halves of one. The English language goes further and calls woman the better half of man.

Therefore, I advise women to resort to civil rebellion against all undesirable and unworthy restraints. All restraints to be beneficial must be voluntary. There is no possibility of harm resulting from civil rebellion. It presupposes purity and reasoned resistance.⁹⁸

Man should learn to give place to women and a country or community in which women are not honoured cannot be considered as civilized.⁹⁹

The Purdah

And why is there all this morbid anxiety about female purity? Have women any say in the matter of male purity? We hear nothing of women's anxiety about men's chastity. Why should men arrogate to themselves the right to regulate female purity? It cannot be superimposed from without. It is a matter of evolution from within and, therefore, of individual self-effort.¹⁰⁰

Chastity is not a hot-house growth. It cannot be protected by the surrounding wall of the *purdah*. It must grow from within and, to be worth anything, it must be capable of withstanding every unsought temptation.¹⁰¹

Dowry System

The system has to go. Marriage must cease to be a matter of arrangement made by parents for money. The system is intimately connected with caste. So long as the choice is restricted to a few hundred young men or young women of a particular caste, the system will persist no matter what is said against it. The girls or boys or their parents will have to break the bonds of caste if the evil is to be eradicated. All this means education of a character that will revolutionize the mentality of the youth of the nation.¹⁰²

Any young man who makes dowry a condition of marriage discredits his education and his country and dishonours womanhood.

. . . A strong public opinion should be created in condemnation of the degrading practice of dowry and young men who soil their fingers with such ill-gotten gold should be ex-communicated from society. Parents of girls should cease to be dazzled by English degrees and should not hesitate to travel outside their little castes and provinces to secure true gallant young men for their daughters.¹⁰³

Widow Re-marriage

Voluntary widowhood consciously adopted by woman who has felt the affection of a partner adds grace and dignity to life, sanctifies the home and uplifts religion itself.

Widowhood imposed by religion or custom is an unbearable yoke and defiles the home by secret vice and degrades religion.

If we would be pure, if we would save Hinduism, we must rid ourselves of this poison of enforced widowhood. The reform must begin by those who have girl-widows taking courage in both their hands and seeing that the child-widows in their charge are duly and well married—not remarried. They were never really married.¹⁰⁴

Divorce

Marriage confirms the right of union between two partners to the exclusion of all the others when, in their joint opinion, they consider such union to be desirable, but it confers no right upon one partner to demand obedience of the other to one's wish for union. What should be done when one partner on moral or other grounds cannot conform to the wishes of the other is a separate question. Personally, if divorce was the only alternative, I should not hesitate to accept it, rather than interrupt my moral progress,—assuming that I want to restrain myself on purely moral grounds.¹⁰⁵

61. SEX EDUCATION

WHAT PLACE has . . . instruction in sexual science in our educational system, or has it any place there at all? Sexual science is of two kinds—that which is used for controlling or overcoming the sexual passion, and that which is used to stimulate and feed it. Instruction in the former is as necessary a part of child's education as the latter is harmful and dangerous and fit therefore only to be shunned. All great religions have rightly regarded *kama* as the arch-enemy of man, anger or hatred coming only in the second place. According to the Gita, the latter is an offspring of the former. The Gita, of course, uses the word *kama* in its wider sense of desire. But the same holds good of the narrow sense in which it is used here.

This, however, still leaves unanswered the question, i.e., whether it is desirable to impart to young pupils a knowledge about the use and function of generative organs. It seems to me that it is necessary to impart such knowledge to a certain extent. At present they are often left to pick up such knowledge anyhow with the result that they are misled into abusive practices. We cannot properly control or conquer the sexual passion by turning a blind eye to it. I am, therefore, strongly in favour of teaching young boys and girls, the significance and right use of their generative organs. And, in my own way, I have tried to impart this knowledge to young children of both sexes for whose training I was responsible.

But the sex education that I stand for must have for its object the conquest and sublimation of the sex passion. Such education should automatically serve to bring home to children the essential distinction between man and brute, to make them realize that it is man's special privilege and pride to be gifted with the faculties of head and heart both, that he is a thinking no less than a feeling animal, as the very derivation of the word मनुष्य* shows, and to renounce the sovereignty of reason over the blind instincts is, therefore, to renounce a man's estate. In man reason quickens and guides the feeling. In brute the soul lies ever dormant. To awaken the heart is to awaken the dormant soul, to awaken reason, and to inculcate discrimination between good and evil.

Who should teach this true science of sex? Clearly, he who has attained mastery over his passions. To teach astronomy and kindred sciences we have teachers who have gone through a course of training in them and are masters of their art. Even so must we have as teachers of sexual science, i.e., the science of sex-control, those who have studied it and have acquired mastery over self. Even a lofty utterance that has not the backing of sincerity and experience will be inert and lifeless, and will utterly fail to penetrate and quicken the hearts of men, while the speech that

* *Manushya* or man

springs from self-realization and genuine experience is always fruitful.

Today our entire environment—our reading, our thinking, our social behaviour—is generally calculated to subserve and cater for the sex-urge. To break through its coils is no easy task. But it is a task worthy of our highest endeavour. Even if there are a handful of teachers endowed with practical experience, who accept the ideal of attaining self-control as the highest duty of man and are fired by a genuine and undying faith in their mission, and are sleeplessly vigilant and active, their labour will light the path of the children . . ., save the unwary from falling into the mire of sexuality, and rescue those who might be already engulfed in it.¹⁰⁶

62. CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

Women's Honour

I HAVE always held that it is physically impossible to violate a woman against her will. The outrage takes place only when she gives way to fear or does not realize her moral strength. If she cannot meet the assailant's physical might, her purity will give her the strength to die before he succeeds in violating her.

Take the case of Sita. Physically she was a weakling before Ravana, but her purity was more than a match even for his giant might. He tried to win her with all kinds of allurements, but could not carnally touch her without her consent. On the other hand, if a woman depends on her own physical strength or upon a weapon she possesses, she is sure to be discomfited whenever her strength is exhausted.¹⁰⁷

It is my firm conviction that a fearless woman who knows that her purity is her best shield can never be dishonoured. However beastly the man, he will bow in shame before the flame of her dazzling purity. . . .

I therefore recommend women . . . to try to cultivate this courage. They will become wholly fearless if they can and cease to tremble as they do today at the thought of assaults. . . . Parents and husbands should instruct women in the art of becoming fearless. It can best be learnt from a living faith in God. Though He is invisible, He is one's unfailing protector. He who has this faith is the most fearless of all. . . .

When a woman is assaulted she may not stop to think in terms of *himsa* or *ahimsa*. Her primary duty is self-protection. She is at liberty to employ every method or means that come to her mind in order to defend her honour. God has given her nails and teeth. She must use them with all her strength and, if need be, die in the effort. The man or woman who has shed all fear of death will be able not only to protect himself or herself but others also through laying down his (or her) life.¹⁰⁸

In the society in the midst of which we are living, such outrages take place. . . . A non-violent man or woman will and should die without retaliation, anger or malice, in self-defence or in defending the honour of his womenfolk. This is the highest form of bravery.¹⁰⁹

The art of dying bravely and with honour does not need any special training, save a living faith in God.¹¹⁰

Prostitution

Prostitution is as old as the world, but I wonder if it was ever a regular feature of town-life that it is today. In any case, the time must come when humanity will rise against the curse and make prostitution a thing of the past, as it has got rid of many evil customs, however time-honoured they might have been.¹¹¹

The proper method of dealing with brothels is for the women to carry on a double propaganda, (a) amongst women who sell their honour for a livelihood, and (b) amongst men whom they must shame into behaving better towards their sisters whom they ignorantly or insolently call the weaker sex.

I remember years and years ago in the early nineties when the brave Salvation Army people, at the risk of their own lives, used to carry on picketing at the corners of the notorious streets of Bombay which were filled with houses of ill-fame. There is no reason why some such thing should not be organized on a large scale.¹¹²

“Prostitutes” is commonly supposed to apply to women of lewd character. But the men who indulge in vice are just as much, if not more, prostitutes than the women, who, in many instances, have to sell their bodies for the sake of earning a livelihood. The evil practice should be declared illegal. But the law can only help to a point. The evil exists clandestinely in every country in spite of the law. Vigorous public opinion can help the law as it also hinders.¹¹³

63. THE ASHRAM VOWS

THIS is the maxim of life which I have accepted, namely, that no work done by any man, no matter how great he is, will really prosper unless he has religious backing. But what is religion? . . . I for one would answer: Not the religion which you will get after reading all the scriptures of the world; it is not really a grasp by the brain, but it is a heart-grasp. It is a thing which is not alien to us but it is a thing which has to be evolved out of us. It is always within us : with some consciously so; with the other quite unconsciously. But it is [always] there; and whether we wake up this religious instinct in us through outside assistance or by inward growth, no matter how it is done, it has got to be done if we want to do anything in the right manner and anything that is going to persist.

Our scriptures have laid down certain rules as maxims of life and as axioms which we have to take for granted as self-demonstrated truths. . . . Believing in these implicitly for all these long years and having actually endeavoured to

reduce to practice these injunctions . . ., I have deemed it necessary to seek the association of those who think with me in founding this institution. . . . The rules that have been drawn up and that have to be observed by every one who seeks to be a member of that Ashram [are as follows] :

The Vow of Truth

Not truth simply as we ordinarily understand it, not truth which merely answers the saying, 'Honesty is the best policy,' implying that, if it is not the best policy, we may depart from it. But here Truth as it is conceived means that we have to rule our life by this law of Truth at any cost; and, in order to satisfy the definition, I have drawn upon the celebrated illustration of the life of Prahlad. For the sake of Truth he dared to oppose his own father; and he defended himself, not by retaliation, not by paying his father back in his own coin. But in defence of Truth as he knew it, he was prepared to die without caring to return the blows that he had received from his father, or from those who were charged with his father's instructions. Not only that, he would not in any way even parry the blows; on the contrary, with a smile on his lips, he underwent the innumerable tortures to which he was subjected, with the result that at last Truth rose triumphant. Not that Prahlad suffered the tortures because he knew that, some day or other in his very lifetime, he would be able to demonstrate the infallibility of the law of Truth. That fact was there; but if he had died in the midst of tortures, he would still have adhered to Truth. That is the Truth which I would like to follow. . . . In our Ashram we make it a rule that we must say 'No' when we mean 'No', regardless of consequences.

The Doctrine of Ahimsa

Literally speaking, *ahimsa* means 'non-killing'. But to me it has a world of meaning, and takes me into the realms much higher, infinitely higher. . . . *Ahimsa* really means that you may not offend anybody; you may not harbour an uncharitable thought, even in connexion with one who

may consider himself to be your enemy. For one who follows this doctrine there is no room for an enemy. . . . But there are people who consider themselves to be his enemies. . . . So it is held that we may not harbour an evil thought even in connexion with such persons. If we return blow for blow, we depart from the doctrine of *ahimsa*. But I go further. If we resent a friend's action, or the so-called enemy's action, we still fall short of this doctrine. But when I say that we should not resent, I do not say that we should acquiesce; but by 'resenting' I mean wishing that some harm should be done to the enemy; or that he should be put out of the way, not even by any action of ours, but by the action of somebody else, or, say, by divine agency. If we harbour even this thought, we depart from this doctrine of *ahimsa*. Those who join the Ashram have literally to accept that meaning.

That does not mean that we practise that doctrine in its entirety. Far from it. It is an ideal which we have to reach, and it is an ideal to be reached even at this very moment, if we are capable of doing so. But it is not a proposition in geometry; it is not even like solving difficult problems in higher mathematics—it is infinitely more difficult than solving those problems. Many of you have burnt the midnight oil in solving those problems. If you want to follow out this doctrine, you will have to do much more than burn the midnight oil. You will have to pass many a sleepless night, and go through many a mental torture and agony, before you can even be within measurable distance of this goal. It is the goal, and nothing less than that, which you and I have to reach if we want to understand what a religious life means.

. . . A man who believed in the efficacy of this doctrine finds in the ultimate stage, when he is about to reach the goal, the whole world at his feet. . . . If you express your love—*ahimsa*—in such a manner that it impresses itself indelibly upon your so-called enemy, he must return that love. . . . Under this rule there is no room for organized assassinations, or for murders openly committed, or . . . for any violence for the sake of your country or even for guarding the

honour of precious ones that may be under your charge. After all, that would be a poor defence of their honour. This doctrine tells us that we may guard the honour of those under our charge by delivering ourselves into the hands of the man who would commit the sacrilege. And that requires far greater physical and mental courage than the delivering of blows. . . . If you do not retaliate, but stand your ground between your charge and the opponent, simply receiving the blows without retaliating, what happens? I give you my promise that the whole of his violence will be expended on you, and your friend will be left unscathed. Under this plan of life there is no conception of patriotism which justifies such wars as you witness today in Europe.

The Vow of Celibacy

Those who want to perform national service, or to have a gleam of the real religious life, must lead a celibate life, whether married or unmarried. Marriage only brings a woman closer to man, and they become friends in a special sense, never to be parted either in this life or in the lives to come. But I do not think that, in our conception of marriage, our lusts should enter. Be that as it may, this is what is placed before those who come to the Ashram. I do not deal with that at any length.

The Vow of the Control of the Palate

A man who wants to control his animal passions easily does so if he controls his palate. I fear this is one of the most difficult vows to follow. . . . Unless we are prepared to rid ourselves of stimulating, heating, and exciting condiments . . . we will certainly not be able to control the over-abundant, unnecessary, and exciting stimulation of the animal passions. . . . If we do not do that . . ., we are likely to abuse the sacred trust of our bodies that has been given us, and to become less than animals and brutes, eating, drinking and indulging in passions which we share in common with the animals. But have you ever seen a horse or cow indulging in the abuse of the palate as we do? Do you suppose that it

is a sign of civilization, a sign of real life, that we should multiply our eatables so far that we do not even know where we are; and seek dishes until, at last, we have become absolutely mad and run after the newspaper sheets which give us advertisements about these dishes?

The Vow of Non-thieving

I suggest that we are thieves in a way. If I take anything that I do not need for my own immediate use and keep it, I thief it from somebody else. It is the fundamental law of Nature, without exception, that Nature produces enough for our wants from day to day; and if only everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world, there would be no man dying of starvation. I am no Socialist, and I do not want to dispossess those who have got possessions; but I do say that personally those of us who want to see light out of darkness have to follow this rule. I do not want to dispossess anybody; I should then be departing from the rule of non-violence. If somebody else possesses more than I do, let him. But so far as my own life has to be regulated, I dare not possess anything which I do not want. In India, we have got many millions of people who have to be satisfied with one meal a day, and that meal consisting of a *chapatti* containing no fat in it and a pinch of salt. You and I have no right to anything that we really have until these many millions are clothed and fed. You and I, who ought to know better, must adjust our wants, and even undergo voluntary privation in order that they may be nursed, fed and clothed.

The Vow of Non-possession

[This] follows as a matter of course.

The Vow of Swadeshi

The vow of *swadeshi* is a necessary vow. We are departing from one of the sacred laws of our being when we leave our neighbourhood and go out somewhere else in order to satisfy our wants. If a man comes from Bombay and

offers you wares, you are not justified in supporting the Bombay merchant so long as you have got a merchant at your very door, born and bred in Madras.

This is my view of *swadeshi*. In your village you are bound to support your village barber to the exclusion of the finished barber who may come to you from Madras. If you find it necessary that your village barber should reach the attainments of the barber from Madras, you may train him to that. Send him to Madras by all means, if you wish, in order that he may learn his calling. Until you do that you are not justified in going to another barber. That is *swadeshi*. So when we find that there are many things that we cannot get in India, we must try to do without them. We may have to do without many things; but believe me, when you have that frame of mind, you will find a great burden taken off your shoulders, even as the Pilgrim did in that inimitable book *Pilgrim's Progress*. There came a time when the mighty burden that the Pilgrim was carrying unconsciously dropped from him, and he felt a freer man than he was when he started on the journey. So will you feel freer men than you are now, if immediately you adopt this *swadeshi* life.

The Vow of Fearlessness

I found through my wanderings in India that my country is seized with a paralyzing fear. We may not open our lips in public : we may only talk about our opinions secretly. We may do anything we like within the four walls of our house; but those things are not for public consumption.

If we had taken a vow of silence, I would have nothing to say. I suggest to you that there is only One whom we have to fear, that is God. When we fear God, then we shall fear no man, however high-placed he may be; and if you want to follow the vow of Truth, then fearlessness is absolutely necessary. Before we can aspire to guide the destinies of India, we shall have to adopt this habit of fearlessness.

The Vow regarding the 'Untouchables'

There is an ineffaceable blot that Hinduism today carries with it. I have declined to believe that it has been handed down to us from immemorial times. I think that this miserable, wretched, enslaving spirit of 'untouchableness' must have come to us when we were at our lowest ebb. This evil has stuck to us and still remains with us. It is, to my mind, a curse that has come to us; and as long as the curse remains with us, so long I think we are bound to consider that every affliction in this sacred land is a proper punishment for the indelible crime that we are committing. That any person should be considered untouchable because of his calling passes my comprehension; and you, the student world, who receive all this modern education, if you become a party to this crime, it were better that you received no education whatsoever.

Education through the Vernaculars

In Europe, every cultured man learns not only his own language but also other languages.

In order to solve the problem of language in India, we in this Ashram must make it a point to learn as many Indian vernaculars as possible. The trouble of learning these languages is nothing compared to that of mastering English. How dare we rub off from our memory all the years of our infancy? But that is precisely what we do when we commence our higher life through the medium of a foreign tongue. This creates a breach for which we shall have to pay dearly. And you will see now the connexion between this education and untouchability—this persistence of the latter in spite of the spread of knowledge and education. Education enables us to see the horrible crime, but we are seized with fear, and, therefore, we cannot take this doctrine to our homes.

The Vow of Khaddar

You may ask, 'Why should we use our hands?' You may say, 'Manual work has got to be done by those who are illiterate. I can only occupy myself with reading literature and political essays.' We have to realize the

dignity of labour. If a barber or shoe-maker attends a college, he ought not to abandon his profession. I consider that such professions are just as good as the profession of medicine.

Last of all, when you have conformed to these rules, you may come to:

The Religious Use of Politics

Politics, divorced from religion, have absolutely no meaning. If the student world crowd the political platforms of this country, that is not necessarily a healthy sign of national growth; but this does not mean that you, in your student life, ought not to study politics. Politics are a part of our being; we ought to understand our national institutions. We may do this from our infancy. So, in our Ashram every child is taught to understand the political institutions of our country and to know how the country is vibrating with new emotions, with new aspirations, with new life. But we want also the steady light, the infallible light of religious faith; not a faith which merely appeals to the intelligence, but a faith which is indelibly inscribed on the heart. First we want to realize our religious consciousness, and immediately we have done that, the whole department of life is open to us; and it should then be a sacred privilege of all, so that, when young men grow to manhood, they may do so properly equipped to battle with life. Today what happens is this : much of the political life is confined to the students, but immediately they cease to be students, they sink into oblivion, seeking miserable employments, knowing nothing about God, nothing of fresh air or bright light, or of real vigorous independence, such as comes out of obedience to those laws that I have placed before you. . . .¹¹⁴

XII : FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY

64. THE GOSPEL OF FREEDOM

THERE IS no such thing as slow freedom. Freedom is like a birth. Till we are fully free, we are slaves. All birth takes place in a moment.¹

Gilded Slavery

Golden fetters are no less galling to a self-respecting man than iron ones. The sting lies in the fetters, not in the metal.²

To my mind golden shackles are far worse than iron ones, for one easily feels the irksome and galling nature of the latter, and is prone to forget the former. If, therefore, India must be in chains, I would they were of iron rather than of gold or other precious metals.³

Right to Freedom

Freedom is not worth having if it does not connote freedom to err and even to sin. If God Almighty has given the humblest of His creatures the freedom to err, it passes my comprehension how human beings, be they ever so experienced and able, can delight in depriving other human beings of that precious right.⁴

As every country is fit to eat, to drink and to breathe, even so is every nation fit to manage its own affairs, no matter how badly.⁵

Superimposed control is bad any day. . . . When this control is removed, the nation will breathe free, it will have the right to make mistakes. This ancient method, of progressing by making mistakes and correcting them, is the proper way.⁶

Individual Freedom

It is my certain conviction that no man loses his freedom except through his own weakness.⁷

I value individual freedom, but you must not forget that man is essentially a social being. He has risen to his present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress. Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have to learn to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the whole society enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member.⁸

If this [individual liberty] goes, then surely all is lost, for, if the individual ceases to count, what is left of society? Individual freedom alone can make a man voluntarily surrender himself completely to the service of society. If it is wrested from him, he becomes an automaton and society is ruined. No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom. It is contrary to the very nature of man. Just as a man will not grow horns or tail, so he will not exist as man if he has no mind of his own. In reality, even those who do not believe in the liberty of the individual believe in their own. Modern editions of Chinghiz Khan retain their own.⁹

Concept of Freedom

My conception of freedom is no narrow conception. It is co-extensive with the freedom of man in all his majesty.¹⁰

Every individual must have the fullest liberty to use his talents consistently with equal use by neighbours, but no one is entitled to the arbitrary use of the gains from the talents. He is part of the nation or, say, the social structure surrounding him. Therefore, he can use his talents not for self only but for the social structure of which he is but a part and on whose sufferance he lives.¹¹

Will to be Free

No tyrant has ever yet succeeded in his purpose without carrying the victim with him, it may be, as it often is, by force. Most people choose rather to yield to the will of the tyrant than to suffer for the consequence of resistance. Hence does terrorism form part of the stock-in-trade of the

tyrant. But we have instances in history where terrorism has failed to impose the terrorist's will upon his victim.¹²

Even the most despotic government cannot stand except for the consent of the governed, which consent is often forcibly procured by the despot. Immediately the subject ceases to fear the despotic force, his power is gone.¹³

The moment the slave resolves that he will no longer be a slave, his fetters fall. He frees himself and shows the way to others. Freedom and slavery are mental states. Therefore, the first thing is to say to yourself: 'I shall no longer accept the role of a slave. I shall not obey orders as such, but shall disobey them when they are in conflict with my conscience.'

The so-called master may lash you and try to force you to serve him. You will say: 'No, I will not serve you for your money or under a threat.' This may mean suffering. Your readiness to suffer will light the torch of freedom which can never be put out.¹⁴

Price of Freedom

Whether we are one or many, we must refuse to purchase freedom at the cost of our self-respect or our cherished convictions. I have known even little children become unbending when an attempt has been made to cross their declared purpose, be it ever so flimsy in the estimation of their parents.¹⁵

We must be content to die if we cannot live as free men and women.¹⁶

Man has to thank himself for his dependence. He can be independent as soon as he wills it.¹⁷

Freedom is never dear at any price. It is the breath of life. What would a man not pay for living?¹⁸

Freedom for Lowliest

It gives me both pain and surprise when I find people feeling anxious about their future under a freed India. For me an India which does not guarantee freedom to the lowliest of those born, not merely within an artificial boundary but within its natural boundary, is not free India.

Our fear paralyses our thinking powers, or we should at once know that freedom means a state, at any rate, somewhat better than the present for every honest man or woman. It is exploiters, money-grabbers, pirates and the like who have to fear the advent of freedom.¹⁹

I shall strive for a constitution which will release India from all thralldom and patronage, and give her, if need be, the right to sin. I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country, in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability, or the curse of the intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women will enjoy the same rights as men.

Since we shall be at peace with all the rest of the world, neither exploiting, nor being exploited, we should have the smallest army imaginable. All interests not in conflict with the interests of the dumb millions will be scrupulously respected, whether foreign or indigenous. Personally, I hate distinction between foreign and indigenous. This is the India of my dreams. . . . I shall be satisfied with nothing else.²⁰

No Exploitation

If I want freedom for my country, believe me, if I can possibly help it, I do not want that freedom in order that I, belonging to a nation which counts one-fifth of the human race, may exploit any other race upon earth, or any single individual. If I want that freedom for my country, I would not be deserving of that freedom if I did not cherish and treasure the equal right of every other race, weak or strong, to the same freedom.²¹

Men aspiring to be free can hardly think of enslaving others. If they try to do so, they will only be binding their own chains of slavery tighter.²²

Independence of my conception means nothing less than the realization of the "Kingdom of God" within you and on this earth. I would rather work for and die in the

pursuit of this dream, though it may never be realized. That means infinite patience and perseverance.

If India is satisfied with the mere attainment of political independence and there is nothing better for me to do, you will find me retiring to the Himalayas leaving those who wish to listen to me to seek me out there.²³

In concrete terms, . . . the independence should be political, economic and moral.

'Political' necessarily means the removal of the control of the British army in every shape and form. 'Economic' means entire freedom from British capitalists and capital, as also their Indian counterpart. In other words, the humblest must feel equal to the tallest. This can take place only by capital or capitalists sharing their skill and capital with the lowliest and the least.

'Moral' means freedom from armed defence forces.²⁴

Means of Peace

India has never waged war against any nation. She has put up, sometimes, ill-organized or half-organized resistance in self-defence pure and simple. She has, therefore, not got to develop the will for peace. She has that in abundance whether she knows it or not.

The way she can promote peace is to offer successful resistance to her exploitation by peaceful means. That is to say, she has to achieve her independence . . . by peaceful means. If she can do this, it will be the largest contribution that any single nation will have made towards world peace.²⁵

I personally would wait, if need be, for ages rather than seek to attain the freedom of my country through bloody means. I feel in the innermost recesses of my heart, after a political experience extending over an unbroken period of close upon thirty-five years, that the world is sick unto death of blood-spilling. The world is seeking a way out, and I flatter myself with the belief that perhaps it will be the privilege of the ancient land of India to show that way out to the hungry world.

I have, therefore, no hesitation whatsoever in inviting all the great nations of the earth to give their hearty co-operation to India in her mighty struggle. It must be a sight worth contemplating and treasuring that millions of people have given themselves to suffering without retaliation in order that they might vindicate the dignity and honour of the nation.²⁶

I would far rather that India perished than that she won freedom at the sacrifice of truth.²⁷

It would not satisfy my soul to gain freedom for India and not to help in the peace of the world. I have the conviction in me that, when England ceases to prey upon India, she will also cease to prey upon other nations. At any rate, India will have no part in the blood-guilt.²⁸

Meaning of India's Independence

... India's freedom must revolutionize the world's outlook upon Peace and War. Her impotence affects the whole of mankind.²⁹

My ambition is much higher than independence. Through the deliverance of India I seek to deliver the so-called weaker races of the earth from the crushing heels of Western exploitation...³⁰

National independence is not a fiction. It is as necessary as individual independence. But neither, if it is based on non-violence, may ever be a menace to the equal independence of the nation or the individual as the case may be. As with individual and national independence, so with the international. The legal maxim is equally moral. *Sic utere tuo ut alienum non laedas*.* It has been well said that the universe is compressed in the atom. There is not one law for the atom and another for the universe.³¹

International Co-operation

I want co-operation between nations for the salvaging of civilization, but co-operation presupposes free nations worthy of co-operation.³²

*'So use your own property as not to injure the rights of another.'

Freedom of Exploited Races

When I am gone India will be free and, not only India, but the whole world will be free. I do not believe that the Americans or English are free. They will not be free so long as they have the power to hold the coloured nations in subjection. I know my purpose and I know what freedom is. English teachers taught me its meaning, and I must interpret that freedom according to what I see and have experienced.³³

Freedom of India will demonstrate to all the exploited races of the earth that their freedom is very near and that in no case will they, henceforth, be exploited.³⁴

65. WHAT SWARAJ MEANS TO ME

SWARAJ FOR me means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen. . . . I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever. I have no desire to exchange 'king log for king stork.'³⁵

By Swaraj I mean the government of India by the consent of the people as ascertained by the largest number of the adult population, male or female, native-born or domiciled, who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters.

Real Swaraj will come, not by the acquisition of authority by a few, but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, Swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.³⁶

Self-government means continuous effort to be independent of government control, whether it is foreign government or whether it is national.³⁷

The word Swaraj is a sacred word, a Vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint, and not freedom from all restraint which 'independence' often means.³⁸

Swaraj for the Poor

The Swaraj of my—our—dream recognizes no race or religious distinctions. Nor is it to be the monopoly of the lettered persons or yet of moneyed men. Swaraj is to be for all, including the former, but emphatically including the maimed, the blind, the starving, toiling millions.³⁹

The Swaraj of my dream is the poor man's Swaraj. The necessities of life should be enjoyed by you in common with those enjoyed by the princes and the moneyed men. But that does not mean that they should have palaces like theirs. They are not necessary for happiness. You or I would be lost in them. But you ought to get all the ordinary amenities of life that a rich man enjoys. I have not the slightest doubt that Swaraj is not Poorna Swaraj until these amenities are guaranteed to you under it.⁴⁰

. . . What we mean and want through Poorna Swaraj . . . is an awakening among the masses, a knowledge among them of their true interest and ability to serve that interest against the whole world, . . . harmony, freedom from aggression from within or without, and a progressive improvement in the economic condition of the masses. . . .⁴¹

Real Swaraj *must* be felt by all—man, woman and child. To labour for that consummation is true revolution. India has become a pattern for all exploited races of the earth, because India's has been an open, unarmed effort which demands sacrifice from all without inflicting injury on the usurper. The millions in India would not have been awakened but for the open, unarmed struggle. Every deviation from the straight path has meant a temporary arrest of the evolutionary revolution.⁴²

No Majority Rule

It has been said that Indian Swaraj will be the rule of the majority community, i.e., the Hindus. There could not be a greater mistake than that. If it were to be true, I for one would refuse to call it Swaraj and would fight it with all the strength at my command, for to me Hind Swaraj is the rule of all people, is the rule of justice. Whether, under that rule, the ministers were Hindus or Mussalmans or Sikhs and whether legislatures were exclusively filled by the

Hindus or Mussalmans or any other community, they would have to do even-handed justice.⁴³

Today our minds are clouded by delusion. In our ignorance, we quarrel with one another and indulge in rowdyism against our own brethren. For such as these there is neither salvation nor Swaraj. Self-discipline or rule over self is the first condition of self-rule or Swaraj.⁴⁴

Freedom of Expression

In a vast country like this, there must be room for all schools of honest thought. And the least, therefore, that we owe to ourselves, as to others, is to try to understand the opponent's view-point and, if we cannot accept it, respect it as fully as we expect him to respect ours. It is one of the indispensable tests of a healthy public life and, therefore, fitness for Swaraj.⁴⁵

Freedom of speech and pen is the foundation of Swaraj. If the foundation stone is in danger, you have to exert the whole of your might in order to defend that single stone.⁴⁶

Achievement of Swaraj

I have had the hardihood to say that Swaraj could not be granted even by God. We would have to earn it ourselves. Swaraj from its very nature is not in the giving of anybody.⁴⁷

Swaraj is the abandonment of the fear of death. A nation which allows itself to be influenced by the fear of death cannot attain Swaraj, and cannot retain it if somehow attained.⁴⁸

Swaraj can never be a free gift by one nation to another. It is a treasure to be purchased with a nation's best blood. It will cease to be a gift when we have paid dearly for it. . . . Swaraj will be a fruit of incessant labour, suffering beyond measure.⁴⁹

Surely Swaraj will not drop from the clouds. It will be the fruit of patience, perseverance, ceaseless toil, courage and intelligent appreciation of the environment.⁵⁰

For me the only training in Swaraj we need is the ability to defend ourselves against the whole world and to live our natural life in perfect freedom, even though it may

be full of defects. Good government is no substitute for self-government.⁵¹

The pilgrimage to Swaraj is a painful climb. It requires attention to details. It means vast organizing ability, it means penetration into the villages solely for the service of the villagers. In other words, it means national education, i.e., education of the masses. It means an awakening of national consciousness among the masses. It will not spring like the magician's mango. It will grow almost unperceived like the banyan tree. A bloody revolution will never perform the trick. Haste here is most certainly waste.⁵²

One sometimes hears it said: 'Let us get the Government of India in our own hands and everything will be all right.' There could be no greater superstition than this. No nation has thus gained its independence. The splendour of the spring is reflected in every tree, the whole earth is then filled with the freshness of youth. Similarly, when the Swaraj spirit has really permeated society, a stranger suddenly come upon us will observe energy in every walk of life, he will find national servants engaged, each according to his own abilities, in a variety of public activities.⁵³

Basis in Self-sacrifice

Swaraj can be maintained only where there is a majority of loyal and patriotic people to whom the good of the nation is paramount above all other considerations whatever including their personal profit.⁵⁴

My Swaraj will be . . . not a result of murder of others but a voluntary act of continuous self-sacrifice. My Swaraj will not be a bloody usurpation of rights, but the acquisition of power will be a beautiful and natural fruit of duty well and truly performed. It will . . . provide amplest excitement of the Chaitanya type, not of the Nero type. . . . It can come, often does come, when the horizon is the blackest. But I know that it will be preceded by the rise of a class of young men and women who will find full excitement in work, work and nothing but work for the nation.⁵⁵

Without a large, very large, army of self-sacrificing and determined workers, real progress of the masses I hold to

be an impossibility. And without that progress, there is no such thing as Swaraj. Progress towards Swaraj will be in exact proportion to the increase in the number of workers who will dare to sacrifice their all for the cause of the poor.⁵⁶

Swaraj of a people means the sum total of the Swaraj (self-rule) of individuals. And such Swaraj comes only from performance by individuals of their duty as citizens. In it no one thinks of his rights. They come, when they are needed, for better performance of duty.⁵⁷

Through Truth and Non-violence

If we wish to achieve Swaraj through truth and non-violence, gradual but steady building-up from the bottom upwards by constructive effort is the only way. This rules out the deliberate creation of an anarchical state for the overthrow of the established order in the hope of throwing up from within a dictator who would rule with a rod of iron and produce order out of disorder.⁵⁸

We have all—rulers and ruled—been living so long in a stifling, unnatural atmosphere that we might well feel, in the beginning, that we have lost the lungs for breathing the invigorating ozone of freedom. If the reality comes in an orderly, that is, a non-violent manner, because the parties feel that it is right, it will be a revealing lesson for the world.⁵⁹

Genius of Our Civilization

My Swaraj is to keep intact the genius of our civilization. I want to write many new things but they must be all written on the Indian slate. I would gladly borrow from the West when I can return the amount with decent interest.⁶⁰

If Swaraj was not meant to civilize us, and to purify and stabilize our civilization, it would be nothing worth. The very essence of our civilization is that we give a paramount place to morality in all our affairs, public or private.⁶¹

66. I AM NOT ANTI-BRITISH

MY FAITH in human nature is irrepressible and, even under the circumstances of a most adverse character I have found Englishmen amenable to reason and persuasion, and as they always wish to appear to be just even when they are in reality unjust, it is easier to shame them than others into doing the right thing.⁶²

My personal religion . . . enables me to serve my countrymen without hurting Englishmen or, for that matter, anybody else. What I am not prepared to do to my blood-brother I would not do to an Englishman. I would not injure him to gain a kingdom. But I would withdraw co-operation from him if it became necessary, as I had withdrawn from my own brother (now deceased) when it became necessary. I serve the Empire by refusing to partake in its wrong.⁶³

I am not anti-English; I am not anti-British; I am not anti-any Government; but I am anti-untruth, anti-humbug, and anti-injustice. So long as the Government spells injustice, it may regard me as its enemy, implacable enemy.⁶⁴

No one will accuse me of any anti-English tendency. Indeed, I pride myself on my discrimination. I have thankfully copied many things from them. Punctuality, reticence, public hygiene, independent thinking and exercise of judgment and several other things I owe to my association with them.⁶⁵

My nationalism is not so narrow that I should not feel for . . . [Englishmen's] distress or gloat over it. I do not want my country's happiness at the sacrifice of any other country's happiness.⁶⁶

There is no bitterness in me. I claim fellowship with the lowest of animals. Why not, then, with Englishmen with whom we have been bound, for good or ill, for over a century and amongst whom I claim some of my dearest

friends? You [Englishmen] will find me an easy proposition, but if you will repel my advances, I shall go away, not in bitterness, but with a sense that I was not pure enough to find a lodgement in your hearts.⁶⁷

My love of the British is equal to that of my own people. I claim no merit for it, for I have equal love for all mankind without exception. It demands no reciprocity. I own no enemy on earth. That is my creed.⁶⁸

... No Indian has co-operated with the British Government more than I have for an unbroken period of twenty-nine years of public life, in the face of circumstances that might well have turned any other man into a rebel....

I put my life in peril four times for the sake of the Empire; at the time of the Boer War, when I was in charge of the Ambulance corps whose work was mentioned in General Buller's dispatches; at the time of the Zulu Revolt in Natal, when I was in charge of a similar corps; at the time of the commencement of the late war, when I raised an Ambulance corps and, as a result of the strenuous training had a severe attack of pleurisy; and lastly, in fulfilment of my promise to Lord Chelmsford at the War Conference in Delhi, I threw myself in such an active recruiting campaign in Kaira District, involving long and trying marches, that I had an attack of dysentery which proved almost fatal. I did all this in the full belief that acts such as mine must gain for my country an equal status in the Empire.⁶⁹

Autocratic Rule

Originality there could be none in a close monopoly organization like the Government of India*. It is the largest autocracy the world has known. Democracy has been reserved only for great Britain. And when it rules and exploits millions belonging to other races, it becomes an unmitigated evil. It corrupts the whole island with the idea that such exploitation is the best thing for an enlightened democracy to do. It would be well to remember this fundamental fact, if I have correctly estimated it. If we

*Prior to 1947

recognize this, while dealing with the immediate problem, we shall be patient with the present actors. There is no call here for patience with the evil. The distinction will enable us the better to deal with the evil.⁷⁰

Any friend, who is a real friend, and who comes in a spirit of service, not as a superior, is bound to be welcome. India, when she has come into her own, will need all such assistance. The distrust of Englishmen . . . is there. It won't disappear even by transporting Indian students to England. You have got to understand it and live it down. It has its roots in history.⁷¹

. . . So far Indians have known Englishmen only as members of the ruling race—supercilious, when they are not patronizing. The man in the street makes no distinction between such an Englishman and a good, humble European, between the Empire-builder Englishman of the old type that he has known and the new type that is now coming into being, burning to make reparation for what his forefathers did.⁷²

A New Chapter

I can't forget that the story of Britain's connection with India is a tragedy of unfulfilled promises and disappointed hopes. We must keep an open mind. A seeker of truth will never begin by discounting his opponent's statement as unworthy of trust. So I am hopeful, and indeed, no responsible Indian feels otherwise. This time I believe that the British mean business. But the offer [of independence] has come suddenly. . . .

. . . The tide of bitterness had risen high and that is not good for the soul. . . . This is a milestone not only in India's history and Britain's, but in the history of the whole world. . . .⁷³

Commonwealth of Nations

India's greatest glory will consist not in regarding Englishmen as her implacable enemies fit only to be turned out of India at the first available opportunity, but in turning them into friends and partners in a new commonwealth of nations in the place of an Empire based

upon exploitation of the weaker or undeveloped nations and races of the earth and, therefore, finally [based] upon force.⁷⁴

Andrews made me understand the significance of the King-Emperor's role. The British King is King also in the Dominions, but he is the Emperor of India. India alone makes the Empire. The Dominions are peopled by your [the Britishers'] cousins. But we Indians, with our different culture and traditions, can never belong to the British family. We may belong to a world-wide family of nations, but first we must cease to be underdogs. So, I set myself to win independence. . . .

Englishmen must learn to be the Brahmins, not Banias. The Bania, I should explain, is the trader, or as Napoleon put it, the shopkeeper. The Brahmin is the man who is intelligent enough to rank the moral above the material values of life. . . . Englishmen have still to evolve the British *Brahminical* spirit. . . .

If India feels the glow of independence, she probably would enter into such a treaty [of defensive alliance with Britain] of her own free will. The spontaneous friendship between India and Britain would then be extended to other Powers and, among them, they would hold the balance, since they alone would possess moral force. To see that vision realized, I want to live for 125 years.⁷⁵

67. RAMARAJYA

BY RAMARAJYA I do not mean Hindu Raj. I mean by Ramarajya Divine Raj, the Kingdom of God. For me Rama and Rahim are one and the same deity. I acknowledge no other God but the one God of truth and righteousness.

Whether Rama of my imagination ever lived or not on this earth, the ancient ideal of Ramarajya is undoubtedly one of true democracy in which the meanest citizen could be sure of swift justice without an elaborate and costly procedure. Even the dog is described by the poet to have received justice under Ramarajya.⁷⁶

Ramarajya of my dream ensures equal rights alike of prince and pauper.⁷⁷

Definition of Independence

By political independence I do not mean an imitation of the British House of Commons, or the Soviet rule of Russia or the Fascist rule of Italy or the Nazi rule of Germany. They have systems suited to their genius. We must have ours suited to ours. What that can be is more than I can tell. I have described it as Ramarajya i.e., sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority.⁷⁸

Friends have repeatedly challenged me to define independence. At the risk of repetition, I must say that independence of my dream means Ramarajya i.e., the Kingdom of God on earth. I do not know what it will be like in Heaven. I have no desire to know the distant scene. If the present is attractive enough, the future cannot be very unlike.⁷⁹

No Coercion

My conception of Ramarajya excludes the replacement of the British army by a national army of occupation. A country that is governed by even its national army can never be morally free and, therefore, its so-called weakest member can never rise to his fullest moral height.⁸⁰

There can be no Ramarajya in the present state of iniquitous inequalities in which a few roll in riches and the masses do not get even enough to eat. . . . My opposition to the Socialists and others consists in attacking violence as a means of effecting any lasting reform.⁸¹

I compare *nirvana* to Ramarajya or the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. . . . The withdrawal of British power does not mean Ramarajya. How can it happen when we have all along been nursing violence in our hearts under the garb of non-violence?⁸²

Respect for Others

My Hinduism teaches me to respect all religions. In this lies the secret of Ramarajya.⁸³

If you want to see God in the form of Ramarajya, the first requisite is self-introspection. You have to magnify your own faults a thousandfold and shut your eyes to the faults of your neighbours. That is the only way to real progress.⁸⁴

68. KASHMIR

Problem and Solution

WHAT is the situation? It is stated that a rebel army composed of Afridis and the like, ably officered, was advancing towards Srinagar, burning and looting villages along the route, destroying even the electric power house, thus leaving Srinagar in darkness. It is difficult to believe that this entry could take place without some kind of encouragement from the Pakistan Government. I have not enough data to come to a judgment as to the merits of the case. Nor is it necessary for my purpose. All I know is that it was right for the Union Government to rush troops, even a handful, to Srinagar. That must save the situation to the extent of giving confidence to the Kashmiris. . . . The result is in the hands of God. Men can but do or die. I shall not shed a tear if the little Union force is wiped

out, like the Spartans, bravely defending Kashmir nor shall I mind . . . Muslim, Hindu and Sikh comrades, men and women, dying at their post in defence of Kashmir. That will be a glorious example to the rest of India. Such heroic defence will infect the whole of India and we will forget that the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs were ever enemies.⁸⁵

I am amazed to see that the Government of Pakistan disputes the veracity of the Union's representation to the UNO. and the charge that Pakistan has a hand in the invasion of Kashmir by the raiders. Mere denials cut no ice. It was incumbent upon the Indian Union to go to the rescue of Kashmir when the latter sought its help in expelling the raiders, and it was the duty of Pakistan to co-operate with the Union. But while Pakistan professed its willingness to co-operate, it took no concrete steps in that direction. . . .

A war will bring both the Dominions under the sway of a third power and nothing can be worse. I plead for amity and goodwill. . . . The understanding should however be genuine. To harbour internal hatred may be even worse than war.⁸⁶

69. FOREIGN SETTLEMENTS IN INDIA

(a) Goa

Time for Change

THE LITTLE Portuguese Settlement which merely exists on the sufferance of the British Government can ill afford to ape its bad manners. In Free India, Goa cannot be allowed to exist as a separate entity in opposition to the laws of the free State. Without a shot being fired, the people of Goa will be able to claim and receive the rights of citizenship of the free State. The present Portuguese Government will no longer be able to rely upon the protection of British arms to isolate and keep under subjection the inhabitants of Goa against their will. I would

venture to advise the Portuguese Government of Goa to recognize the signs of the times and come to honourable terms with the inhabitants, rather than function on any treaty that might exist between them and the British Government.⁸⁷

Rule of Terror

...I have visited Mozambique, Delagoa and Inhambane. I did not notice there any Government for philanthropic purposes. Indeed, I was astonished to see the distinction that the Government made between Indians and the Portuguese and between the Africans and themselves. Nor does the history of the Portuguese Settlement in India prove the claim [of benevolent rule]. Indeed, what I see and know of the conditions of things in Goa is hardly edifying. That the Indians in Goa have been speechless is proof, not of the innocence or the philanthropic nature of the Portuguese Government, but of the rule of terror.⁸⁸

... It is ridiculous ... to write of Portugal as the Motherland of the Indians of Goa. Their mother country is as much India as mine. Goa is outside British India, but it is within geographical India as a whole. And there is very little, if anything, in common between the Portuguese and the Indians in Goa.⁸⁹

Civil Liberty

To the inhabitants of Goa I will say that they should shed fear of the Portuguese Government, as the people of other parts of India have shed fear of the mighty British Government, and assert their fundamental right of civil liberty and all it means.⁹⁰

It is ... most essential for the success of the movement that it should be conducted by the Gomantakas on the clearest possible issue, i.e., civil liberty. The larger question of Swaraj should await the attainment by the whole of India unless, of course, the Portuguese Government wisely come to terms with the inhabitants of the Settlement through friendly negotiations. It cannot be attained by any direct action of the citizens, whether violent or non-violent. In

non-violent action success is assured where every inhabitant is a hero ready to lay down his or her life. It is less to be thought of in Goa than in the more numerous and better seasoned and awakened British India. Therefore, the clearest possible issue of civil liberty must be kept steadily in view.

The second condition of success is that the fight must be through non-violent and, therefore, also entirely open means.

Thirdly, there should be no parties struggling for power and position. Where the goal is common, different parties have no meaning.⁹¹

Every account received by me personally and seen in the papers here in this part of India confirms the contrary view [that there is no civil liberty in Goa]. I suppose, the report of the sentence by . . . Court Martial of eight years on Dr. Braganza and his contemplated exile to a far off Portuguese Settlement is by itself a striking corroboration of the fact that civil liberty is a rare article in Goa. Why should a law-abiding citizen like Dr. Braganza be considered so dangerous as to be singled out for exile? . . .

Inhabitants of Goa can afford to wait for independence, until much greater India has regained it. But no person or group can thus remain without civil liberty without losing self-respect.⁹²

. . . The game of hunting lovers of civil liberty is going on merrily in Goa. A small power, because of its smallness, often acts with impunity where a great power cannot. . . . What of the Portuguese power which boasts of philanthropy and alliance with the Roman Catholic Church? That power will have to justify itself before man and God. The blood of the innocents . . . will cry out from their tombs or their ashes. It is more potent than the voice of the living, however powerful and eloquent.⁹³

(b) French India

. . . The hands of imperialism are always dyed red. The sooner imperialistic powers shed their imperialism like Ashoka the good, the better it will be for the

groaning world. One may be pardoned for giving credit to France, where credit is deserved as it is in the case of French India. . . .⁹⁴

I undoubtedly hold the view that the Indians in these possessions are bound to merge in independent India in good time. Only, the Indians in these territories should not take the law in their own hands. They have constitutional means open to them and then, there is our Chief Minister [Jawaharlal Nehru] who has vindicated the freedom of Indonesia. Surely, he is not going to neglect his own kith and kin in the two possessions.⁹⁵

. . . After all the French are a great people, lovers of liberty. They must not be subjected to any strain by India which has come in possession of liberty.⁹⁶

. . . My opinion is quite emphatic. It is not possible that the inhabitants of these small Foreign Settlements would be forced to remain under servility in the face of the millions of their countrymen who have become free from British rule. I could [never] countenance an inferior status in the little Foreign Settlements in India. I hope . . . that the great French nation would never identify itself with the suppression of people whether black or brown in India or elsewhere.⁹⁷

70. INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Partition Un-Islamic

I AM firmly convinced that the Pakistan demand as put forth by the Muslim League is un-Islamic and I have not hesitated to call it sinful.

Islam stands for the unity and brotherhood of mankind, not for disrupting the oneness of the human family. Therefore, those who want to divide India into possibly warring groups are enemies alike of India and Islam.⁹⁸

Two-Nations' Theory Untrue

There may be arguable grounds for maintaining that Muslims in India are a separate nation. But I have never

heard it said that there are as many nations as there are religions on earth.⁹⁹

The 'two-nations' theory is an untruth. The vast majority of Muslims of India are converts to Islam or descendants of converts. They did not become a separate nation as soon as they became converts.¹⁰⁰

I have always held that there is no distinction between the two [Hindus and Muslims]. Even though their observances differ, these do not separate them. They undoubtedly profess different religions, but they, like others, come from the same root.¹⁰¹

No Forcible Resistance to Partition

As a man of non-violence, I cannot forcibly resist the proposed partition if the Muslims of India really insist upon it. But I can never be a willing party to the vivisection.¹⁰²

My life is made up of compromises, but they have been compromises that have brought me nearer the goal. . . . If God so desires it, I may have to become a helpless witness to the undoing of my dream.¹⁰³

. . . If the eight crores of Muslims desire it, no power on earth can prevent it, notwithstanding opposition violent or non-violent.¹⁰⁴

To undo Pakistan by force will be to undo Swaraj.¹⁰⁵

It is possible to turn Pakistan, which I have declared an evil, into unadulterated good, if all the forebodings are dispelled and enmities are turned into friendship and mutual distrust gives place to trust.¹⁰⁶

Protection of Minorities

I cannot understand a Pakistan where no non-Muslims can live in peace and security, nor a Hindustan where the Muslims are unsafe.¹⁰⁷

I am working to this end. I am working in such a manner that the majority community in each State should go forward and create the necessary conditions of freedom.¹⁰⁸

My non-violence bids me dedicate myself to the service of the minorities. It would be like a new birth and give

me additional strength if the Hindus and the Mussalmans of both these places began to live at peace with each other and shed their animosity.¹⁰⁹

It is the bounden duty of the majority in Pakistan, as of the majority in the Union, to protect the small minority whose honour and life and property are in their hands. . . .

To drive every Muslim from India and to drive every Hindu and Sikh from Pakistan will mean war and eternal ruin for the country.¹¹⁰

Settlement of Differences: No War

India and Pakistan should settle their differences by mutual consultations and, failing that, fall back upon arbitration.¹¹¹

If Pakistan persists in wrong doing, there is bound to be war between India and Pakistan.¹¹²

If India and Pakistan are to be perpetual enemies and go to war against each other, it will ruin both the Dominions and their hard-won freedom will be soon lost. I do not wish to live to see that day.¹¹³

It is true that there should be no war between the two Dominions. They have to live as friends or die as such. The two will have to work in close co-operation. In spite of being independent of each other, they will have many things in common. If they are enemies, they can have nothing in common. If there is genuine friendship, the people of both the States can be loyal to both. They are both members of the same commonwealth of nations. How can they become enemies of each other?¹¹⁴

71. INDIA'S MISSION

Resort to Soul Force

I FEEL that India's mission is different from that of the others. India is fitted for the religious supremacy of the world. There is no parallel in the world for the process of purification that this country has voluntarily undergone. India is less in need of steel weapons, it has fought with divine weapons; it can still do so. Other nations have been votaries of brute force. The terrible war going on in Europe furnishes a forcible illustration of the truth. India can win all by soul force.

History supplies numerous instances to prove that brute force is as nothing before soul force. Poets have sung about it and seers have described their experiences.¹¹⁵

That Indians are not a nation of cowards is proved by the personal bravery and daring of her martial races, whether Hindu, Mussalman, Sikh or Gurkha. My point is that the spirit of fighting is foreign to India's soil and that probably she has a higher part to play in the evolution of the world. Time alone can show what is to be her destiny.¹¹⁶

I want to see God face to face. God, I *know*, is Truth. For me the only certain means of knowing God is non-violence—*ahimsa*—love. I live for India's freedom and would die for it, because it is part of Truth. Only a free India can worship the true God.

I work for India's freedom because my *swadeshi* teaches me that, being in it and having inherited her culture, I am fittest to serve *her* and *she* has a prior claim to my service.

But my patriotism is not exclusive, it is calculated not only not to hurt any other nation, but to benefit all in the true sense of the word. India's freedom as conceived by me can never be a menace to the world.¹¹⁷

India's destiny lies not along the bloody way of the West, of which she shows signs of tiredness, but along the bloodless way of peace that comes from a simple and godly life. India is in danger of losing her soul. She cannot lose it and live. She must not therefore lazily and helplessly say, 'I cannot escape the onrush from the West.' She must be strong enough to resist it for her own sake and that of the world.¹¹⁸

India has an unbroken tradition of non-violence from times immemorial. But at no time in her ancient history, as far as I know, has it had complete non-violence in action pervading the whole land. Nevertheless, it is my unshakable belief that her destiny is to deliver the message of non-violence to mankind. It may take ages to come to fruition. But so far as I judge, no other country will precede her in the fulfilment of that mission.¹¹⁹

On India rests the burden of pointing the way to all the exploited races of the earth. She won't be able to bear that burden today if non-violence does not permeate her more than [it does] today. I have been trying to fit ourselves for that mission by giving a wider bend to our struggle. India will become a torch-bearer to the oppressed and exploited races only if she can vindicate the principle of non-violence in her own case, not jettison it as soon as independence of foreign control is achieved.¹²⁰

Land of Duty

...India is essentially *karmabhumi* (land of duty) in contradiction to *bhogabhumi* (land of enjoyment).¹²¹

...Everything in India attracts me. It has everything that a human being with the highest possible aspirations can want.¹²²

India and the World

An India prostrate at the feet of Europe can give no hope to humanity. An India awakened and free has a message of peace and goodwill to a groaning world.¹²³

India must learn to live before she can aspire to die for humanity.¹²⁴

... My ambition is nothing less than to see international affairs placed on a moral basis through India's efforts.¹²⁵

I want India's rise so that the whole world may benefit. I do not want India to rise on the ruin of other nations. If, therefore, India was strong and able, India would send out to the world her treasures of art and health-giving spices, but will refuse to send out opium or intoxicating liquors although the traffic may bring much material benefit to India.¹²⁶

I would like to see India free and strong so that she may offer herself as a willing and pure sacrifice for the betterment of the world. The individual, being pure, sacrifices himself for the family, the latter for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, the province for the nation, the nation for all.¹²⁷

I am humble enough to admit that there is much that we can profitably assimilate from the West. Wisdom is no monopoly of one continent or one race. My resistance to Western civilization is really a resistance to its indiscriminate and thoughtless imitation based on the assumption that Asiatics are fit only to copy everything that comes from the West.

I do believe that, if India has patience enough to go through the fire of suffering and to resist any unlawful encroachment upon her own civilization which, imperfect though it undoubtedly is, has hitherto stood the ravages of time, she can make a lasting contribution to the peace and solid progress of the world.¹²⁸

India has a far nobler mission viz., to establish friendship and peace in the world. Peace cannot be established through mere conferences. Peace is being broken, as we all see, even while conferences are being held.¹²⁹

Lesson of Tolerance

Decency and toleration to be of value must be capable of standing the severest strain. If they cannot, it will be a sad day for India. . . .¹³⁰

Is the [Indian] Union to be a theocratic State and are the tenets of Hinduism to be imposed on non-Hindus? I hope not. The Indian Union will then cease to be a land of hope and promise, a land to which all Asiatic and African races look, indeed, the whole world.

The world expects not littleness and fanaticism from India. . . . It expects greatness and goodness from which the whole world can derive a lesson and light in its prevailing darkness.¹³¹

A truly independent Free India is bound to run to the help of its neighbours in distress, for instance, Afghanistan, Ceylon and Burma. The rule also applies to the neighbours of these three and thus by implication they become India's neighbours too. And thus, if individual sacrifice is a living sacrifice, it embraces the whole of humanity.¹³²

India and Asia

If India fails, Asia dies. It has been aptly called the nursery of many blended cultures and civilizations. Let India be and remain the hope of all the exploited races of the earth, whether in Asia, Africa or in any part of the world.¹³³

All eyes rest on India, which has become the hope of Asia and Africa, nay, of the whole world. If India is to realize the hope, it has to stop the fratricide and all Indians have to live like friends and brothers. Clean hearts are the first condition of that happy state.¹³⁴

72. ESSENCE OF DEMOCRACY

THE SPIRIT of democracy is not a mechanical thing to be adjusted by abolition of forms. It requires change of the heart. . . . [It] requires the inculcation of the spirit of brotherhood. . . .¹³⁵

Democracy must in essence . . . mean the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in the service of the common good of all.¹³⁶

Discipline

The highest form of freedom carries with it the greatest measure of discipline and humility. Freedom that comes from discipline and humility cannot be denied; unbridled licence is a sign of vulgarity injurious alike to self and one's neighbours.¹³⁷

Democracy disciplined and enlightened is the finest thing in the world. A democracy prejudiced, ignorant, superstitious, will land itself in chaos and may be self-destroyed.¹³⁸

Responsibility of Individual

In true democracy every man and woman is taught to think for himself or herself. How this real revolution can be brought about I do not know except that every reform, like charity, must begin at home.¹³⁹

In democracy, the individual will is governed and limited by the social will which is the State, which is governed by and for democracy. If every individual takes the law into his own hands, there is no State, it becomes anarchy, i.e., absence of social law or State. That way lies destruction of liberty. Therefore, you should subdue your anger and let the State secure justice.¹⁴⁰

The Test

The truest test of democracy is in the ability of anyone to act as he likes, so long as he does not injure the

life or property of anyone else. It is impossible to control public morals by hooliganism.¹⁴¹

I claim [to be a democrat] if complete identification with the poorest of mankind, an intense longing to live no better than they and a corresponding conscious effort to approach that level to the best of one's ability can entitle one to make it.¹⁴²

A born democrat is a born disciplinarian. Democracy comes naturally to him who is habituated normally to yield willing obedience to all laws, human or divine. . . . Let those who are ambitious to serve democracy qualify themselves by satisfying first this acid test of democracy. Moreover, a democrat must be utterly selfless. He must think and dream not in terms of self or party but only of democracy. Only then does he acquire the right of civil disobedience.

I do not want anybody to give up his convictions or to suppress himself. I do not believe that a healthy and honest difference of opinion will injure our cause. But opportunism, camouflage or patched-up compromises certainly will. If you must dissent, you should take care that your opinions voice your innermost convictions and are not intended merely as a convenient party cry.¹⁴³

Democracy will break under the strain of apron strings. It can exist only on trust.¹⁴⁴

Capital exploits the labour of a few to multiply itself. The sum total of the labour of the crores, wisely realized, automatically increases the wealth of the crores. Therein lies true democracy, true Panchayat Raj.¹⁴⁵

Representation in Democracy

I hold it to be an utter delusion to believe that a large number of delegates is in any way a help to the better conduct of business, or that it safeguards the principle of democracy. Fifteen hundred delegates, jealous of the interests of the people, broad-minded and truthful, would any day be a better safeguard for democracy than six thousand irresponsible men chosen anyhow. To safeguard democracy the people must have a keen sense of independence,

self-respect and their oneness, and should insist on choosing as their representatives only such persons as are good and true.¹⁴⁶

True democracy is not inconsistent with a few persons representing the spirit, the hope and the aspirations of those whom they claim to represent. I hold that democracy cannot be evolved by forcible methods. The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within.¹⁴⁷

The very essence of democracy is that every person represents all the varied interests which compose the nation. It is true that it does not exclude and should not exclude special representation of special interests, but such representation is not its test. It is a sign of its imperfection.¹⁴⁸

In the true democracy of India the unit is the village. . . . True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village.¹⁴⁹

Surely, timidity has no place in democracy, where people in general believe in and want a particular thing. Their representatives have but to give shape to their demand and make it feasible. A favourable mental attitude of the multitude has been found to go a long way in winning battles.¹⁵⁰

The People

The voice of the people may be said to be God's voice, the voice of the Panchayat. But how can there be the voice of God where the people themselves are the exploiters. . . ? If the voice of the people is the voice of God, they will be above party. His scales will be ever evenly weighted with truth and non-violence.¹⁵¹

I have repeated times without number that, for national work, it is not necessary that national workers should have political power. But it is necessary for the people to keep in constant touch with those whom they put in power. These can easily be counted. They are too few. But if the people were to realize their power and use it wisely and well, things would right themselves.¹⁵²

✓ People in a democracy should be satisfied with drawing the Government's attention to mistakes, if any. They could remove the Government if they wished to. But they should not obstruct them by agitating against them. Ours is not a foreign Government having a mighty army and navy to support them. They have to derive their strength from the people.¹⁵³

In democracy the people's will must rule. . . .¹⁵⁴

If the majority of the people are selfish and untrustworthy, how can democracy, Panchayat Raj, work?¹⁵⁵

Majority and Minority

In matters of conscience the law of majority has no place.¹⁵⁶

Let us not push the mandate theory to ridiculous extremes and become slaves to resolutions of majorities. That would be a revival of brute force in a more virulent form. If rights of minorities are to be respected, the majority must tolerate and respect their opinion and action. . . . It will be the duty of the majority to see to it that the minorities receive a proper hearing and are not otherwise exposed to insults.¹⁵⁷

Claiming the right of free opinion and free action as we do, we must extend the same to others. The rule of majority, when it becomes coercive, is as intolerable as that of a bureaucratic minority. We must patiently try to bring round the minority to our view by gentle persuasion and argument.¹⁵⁸

The rule of majority has a narrow application, i.e., one should yield to the majority in matters of detail. But it is slavery to be amenable to the majority, no matter what its decisions are. . . . Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep. Under democracy, individual liberty of opinion and action is jealously guarded. I, therefore, believe that the minority has a perfect right to act differently from the majority.¹⁵⁹

A living faith cannot be manufactured by the rule of majority.¹⁶⁰

Intolerance

If we want to cultivate a true spirit of democracy, we cannot afford to be intolerant. Intolerance betrays want of faith in one's cause.¹⁶¹

I have repeatedly observed that no school of thought can claim a monopoly of right judgment. We are all liable to err and are often obliged to revise our judgments. In a vast country like this, there must be room for all schools of honest thought. And the least, therefore, that we owe to ourselves as to others is to try to understand the opponent's view-point and, if we cannot accept it, respect it as fully as we expect him to respect ours. It is one of the indispensable tests of a healthy public life and, therefore, fitness for Swaraj.

If we have no charity, and no tolerance, we shall never settle our differences amicably and must, therefore, always submit to the arbitration of a third party, i.e., to foreign domination.¹⁶²

Intolerance, discourtesy and harshness . . . are taboo in all good society and are surely contrary to the spirit of democracy.¹⁶³

Evolution of democracy is not possible if we are not prepared to hear the other side. We shut the doors of reason when we refuse to listen to our opponents or, having listened, make fun of them. If intolerance becomes a habit, we run the risk of missing the truth. Whilst with the limits that nature has put upon our understanding, we must act fearlessly according to the light vouchsafed to us, we must always keep an open mind and be ever ready to find that what we believed to be truth was, after all, untruth. This openness of mind strengthens the truth in us and removes the dross from it if there is any.¹⁶⁴

Quality, not Quantity

I attach the highest importance to quality irrespective almost of quantity. . . . In the midst of suspicion, discord, antagonistic interests, superstition, fear, distrust and the like, there is not only no safety in numbers but there may be even danger in them. . . . Numbers become irresistible

when they act as one man under exact discipline. They are a self-destroying force when each pulls his own way or when no one knows which way to pull.¹⁶⁵

I would only ask a candidate, 'How much of a man or woman you are? Have you got the ability to rise to the occasion?' Provided he or she passes these tests, I would select first the one who belongs to the least numerical section. I would thus give preference to all minorities along just lines, consistent with the welfare of India. . . . Welfare of India means welfare of India as a whole, not of Hindus and Mussalmans or of a particular community.¹⁶⁶

I ask you not to be cowed down by the thought of a small minority. It is sometimes a privilege. I have so often said that I would love to be in the minority of one, because this artificial majority, which is the result of the masses' reverence for me, is a clog in my progress. But for the clog I would hurl defiance. . . .¹⁶⁷

My implicit faith in non-violence does mean yielding to minorities when they are really weak. The best way to weaken communities is to yield to them. Resistance will only rouse their suspicion and strengthen their opposition.¹⁶⁸

Public Opinion

Public opinion alone can keep a society pure and healthy.¹⁶⁹

A popular State can never act in advance of public opinion. If it goes against it, it will be destroyed.¹⁷⁰

Healthy, well-informed and balanced criticism is the ozone of public life.¹⁷¹

Democracy can only represent the average, if not less than the average. Therefore, a democratic institution to be pure has to attend to the all-round education of the humblest and the lowest. It must take in its sweep all superstition and social abuse. In such a society there will be no Christian and non-Christian; there will be no distinction of sex.¹⁷²

What is really needed to make democracy function is not knowledge of facts but right education.¹⁷³

Healthy public opinion has an influence of which we have not realized the full significance. . . . Public opinion becomes intolerable when it becomes violent and aggressive.¹⁷⁴

The only force at the disposal of democracy is that of public opinion. Satyagraha, civil disobedience and fasts have nothing in common with the use of force, veiled or open. But even these have restricted use in democracy.¹⁷⁵

Legislation

Legislation in advance of public opinion is often worse than useless. Non-co-operation is the quickest method of creating public opinion.¹⁷⁶

Democracy demands patient instruction on it before legislation.¹⁷⁷

Political Work

. . . I felt compelled to come into the political field because I found that I could not do even social work without touching politics. I feel that political work must be looked upon in terms of social and moral progress. In democracy no part of life is untouched by politics.¹⁷⁸

Nature of Power

Possession of power makes men blind and deaf, they cannot see things which are under their very nose and cannot hear things which invade their ears. There is thus no knowing what power-intoxicated government may not do. So . . . patriotic men ought to be prepared for death, imprisonment and similar eventualities.¹⁷⁹

Power that comes from service faithfully rendered ennobles. Power that is sought in the name of service and can only be obtained by a majority of votes is a delusion and a snare to be avoided. . . .¹⁸⁰

Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by arts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment.¹⁸¹

To me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in

every department of life. Political power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state every one is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal State, therefore, there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that that government is best which governs the least.¹⁸²

Whilst power, superimposed, always needs the help of police and military, power generated from within should have little or no use for them.¹⁸³

Democracy is an impossible thing until the power is shared by all, but let not democracy degenerate into mobocracy. Even a pariah, a labourer, who makes it possible for you to earn your living, will have his share in self-government. But you will have to touch their lives, go to them, see their hovels where they live packed like sardines. It is up to you to look after this part of humanity. It is possible for you to make their lives or mar their lives.¹⁸⁴

There is no human institution but has its dangers. The greater the institution the greater the chances of abuse. Democracy is a great institution and, therefore, it is liable to be greatly abused. The remedy, therefore, is not avoidance of democracy, but reduction of possibility of abuse to a minimum.¹⁸⁵

... When people come into possession of political power, the interference with the freedom of the people is reduced to a minimum. In other words, a nation that runs its affairs smoothly and effectively without such State interference is truly democratic. Where such a condition is absent, the form of government is democratic in name.¹⁸⁶

Dictatorship

The rule of one man over many is intolerable. It must end. "How" is the question. The way is for the

many to begin to live. To cut off the head of one ruler is easy enough. Remember the legend of Ravana. He had ten heads. As soon as one was cut off, another popped up in its place. The moral is that no cutting off heads becomes necessary in the presence of a living demos.¹⁸⁷

Government of the people, by the people and for the people cannot be conducted at the bidding of one man, however great he may be.¹⁸⁸

Personally, I do not mind Governmental fury as I mind mob fury. The latter is a sign of national distemper and, therefore, more difficult to deal with than the former which is confined to a small corporation. It is easier to oust a Government that has rendered itself unfit to govern than it is to cure unknown people in a mob of their madness.¹⁸⁹

Mobocracy

... Nothing is so easy as to train mobs, for the simple reason that they have no mind, no premeditation. They act in a frenzy. They repent quickly. ... Non-co-operation I am using in order to evolve democracy.¹⁹⁰

... We must train these masses of men who have a heart of gold, who feel for the country, who want to be taught and led. But a few intelligent, sincere, local workers are needed, and the whole nation can be organized to act intelligently, and democracy can be evolved out of mobocracy.¹⁹¹

A democratic organization has to dare to do the right at all cost. He who panders to the weaknesses of a people degrades both himself and the people, and leads them not to democratic but mob rule. The line of demarcation between democracy and mobocracy is often thin, but rigid and stronger than steel unbreakable.

The one leads to life and progress, the other is death pure and simple. In the ultimate analysis, the cause of our fall is to be sought from within, and not from without. All the empires of the world could not have bent us, if as a people, we have been above suspicion and temptation. This may not be regarded as a mere truism. If we

recognize the fundamental facts, we would be true and patient and able to deal with whatever difficulty that may face us whether from within or without.¹⁹²

Militarism

... Democracy and dependence on the military and the police are incompatible. You cannot say it is good in one place and bad in another. Military help will degrade you. In a democracy, if the electorate sets up a hooligan as the head of the Government, they then lie in the bed they have made or else convert the electorate through Satyagraha if necessary. That is democracy.¹⁹³

Democracy and the military spirit I hold to be a contradiction in terms. A democrat relies upon the force not of the arms his State can flaunt in the face of the world, but on the moral force his State can put at the disposal of the world.¹⁹⁴

The spirit of democracy cannot be established in the midst of terrorism, whether governmental or popular. In some respects popular terrorism is more antagonistic to the growth of the democratic spirit than the governmental. For the latter strengthens the spirit of democracy, whereas the former kills it.¹⁹⁵

Democracy and Non-violence

Democracy and violence can ill go together. The States that are today nominally democratic have either to become frankly totalitarian or, if they are to become truly democratic, they must become courageously non-violent. It is a blasphemy to say that non-violence can only be practised by individuals and never by nations which are composed of individuals.¹⁹⁶

The true democrat is he who with purely non-violent means defends his liberty and, therefore, his country's and ultimately that of the whole of mankind.¹⁹⁷

True democracy or the Śwaraj of the masses can never come through untruthful and violent means, for the simple reason that the natural corollary to their use would be to remove all opposition through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists. That does not make for

individual freedom. Individual freedom can have the fullest play only under a regime of unadulterated *ahimsa*.¹⁹⁸

My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence. No country in the world today shows any but patronizing regard for the weak. . . . Western democracy, as it functions today, is diluted Nazism or Fascism. At best it is merely a cloak to hide the Nazi and the Fascist tendencies of imperialism. . . .¹⁹⁹

I believe that true democracy can only be an outcome of non-violence.²⁰⁰

. . . No perfect democracy is possible without perfect non-violence at the back of it.²⁰¹

Democracy: East and West

Western democracy is on its trial, if it has not already proved a failure. May it not be reserved to India to evolve the true science of democracy by giving a visible demonstration of its fitness? Corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be inevitable products of democracy as they undoubtedly are today; nor bulk a true test of democracy.²⁰²

Democracy of the West is, in my opinion, only so-called. It has germs in it, certainly, of the true type. But it can only come when all violence is eschewed and malpractices disappear. The two go hand in hand. Indeed, malpractice is a species of violence. If India is to evolve the true type, there should be no compromise with violence or untruth.²⁰³

India is trying to evolve true democracy, i.e. without violence. Our weapons are those of Satyagraha expressed through the Charkha, the village industries, removal of untouchability, communal harmony, prohibition and non-violent organization of labour as in Ahmedabad. These mean mass effort and mass education. We have big agencies for conducting these activities. They are purely voluntary and their only sanction is service of the lowliest.²⁰⁴

73. THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

Decay of Congress

THE CONGRESS will die a natural and deserved death if and when it substitutes reason and moral influence by *goondaism*.²⁰⁵

All that is wanted is the will to clear the Congress of Augean stables. But if the heads of Congress committees are indifferent or supine, the corruption cannot be dealt with. "If the salt loses its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?"²⁰⁶

Rome's decline began long before it fell. The Congress, which has been nursed for over fifty years by the best brains of the country, will not fall the moment it has begun to decay. It need not fall at all, if the corruption is handled in time.²⁰⁷

Congress and Non-violence

The Congress influence can be effectively exercised only if it retains its non-violence. Its only capital is its moral authority. Any other position may lead to internecine feud and bloodshed.²⁰⁸

To take the name of non-violence when there is the sword in your heart is not only hypocritical and dishonest but cowardly. Our non-violence *vis-a-vis* the British Government has been the non-violence of the weak. Otherwise, why should there be all these wrangles among ourselves?

... There is nothing more demoralizing than fake non-violence of the weak and impotent. If we had the requisite non-violence in us, our public life would be characterized by utmost toleration. There will then be room for as many parties as there are opinions. Differences of opinion would be an indication of healthy independence

of mind which is the law of life, not party intrigues and party strife. The latter are incompatible with independence.²⁰⁹

Basic Aim

The Congress will cease to be popular if it cannot deserve popularity in times of stress. If it cannot provide work for the workless and hungry, if it cannot protect the people from depredations or teach them how to face them, if it cannot help them in the face of danger, it will lose its prestige and popularity.²¹⁰

One Party

There can be only one party in the Congress, i.e., that of Congressmen and no other. That is not to say that there is no room in the Congress for individuals or groups holding different opinions. I do not believe in dead uniformity. "All men are born equal and free" is not Nature's law in the literal sense. All men are born equal in intellect, for instance, but the doctrine of equality will be vindicated if those who have superior intellect will use it not for self-advancement at the expense of others, but for the service of those who are less favoured in that respect than they. Today there are all sorts in the Congress. . . .²¹¹

. . . With the advent of power, Congressmen have begun to think that everything belongs to them. In a way it is true. But this does not imply that all sense of discipline should be thrown to the winds. Discipline and true humility should be a matter of pride for Congressmen.²¹²

The Congress shall be above party intrigues and be a symbol of unity and service of the whole of India.²¹³

Goal of Poorna Swaraj

The Indian National Congress, which is the oldest national political organization and which has after many battles fought her non-violent way to freedom, cannot be allowed to die. It can only die with the nation. A living organism ever grows or it dies. The Congress has won

political freedom, but it has yet to win economic freedom, social and moral freedom. These freedoms are harder than the political, if only because they are constructive, less exciting and not spectacular. All-embracing constructive work evokes the energy of all the units of the millions.

The Congress has got the preliminary and necessary part of her freedom. The hardest has yet to come. In its difficult ascent to democracy, it has inevitably created rotten boroughs leading to corruption and creation of institutions, popular and democratic only in name. How to get out of the weedy and unwieldy growth?

Composition

The Congress *must* do away with its special register of members, at no time exceeding one crore, not even then easily identifiable. It had an unknown register of millions who could never be wanted. Its register should now be co-extensive with all the men and women on the voters' rolls in the country. The Congress business should be to see that no faked name gets in and no legitimate name is left out. On its own register it will have a body of servants of the nation who would be workers doing the work allotted to them from time to time.

Unfortunately for the country, they will be drawn chiefly, for the time being, from the city dwellers, most of whom would be required to work for and in the villages of India. The ranks must be filled in increasing numbers from villagers.

Servants of the People

These servants will be expected to operate upon and serve the voters registered according to law in their own surroundings. Many persons and parties will woo them. The very best will win. Thus and in no other way can the Congress regain its fast ebbing, unique position in the country. But yesterday the Congress was unwittingly the servant of the nation, it was *khuda-i-khidmatgar*—God's servant. Let it now proclaim to itself and the world that it

is only God's servant—nothing more, nothing less. If it engages in the ungainly skirmish for power, it will find one fine morning that it is no more. Thank God, it is now no longer in sole possession of the field.²¹⁴

*Lok Sevak Sangh**

Though split into two, India having attained political independence through means provided by the Indian National Congress, the Congress in its present shape and form, i.e., as a propaganda vehicle and parliamentary machine, has outlived its use. India has still to attain social, moral and economic independence in terms of its seven hundred thousand villages as distinguished from its cities and towns. The struggle for the ascendancy of civil over military power is bound to take place in India's progress towards its democratic goal. It must be kept out of unhealthy competition with political parties and communal bodies. For these and other similar reasons, the A.I.C.C. resolves to disband the existing Congress organization and flower into a Lok Sevak Sangh under the following rules, with power to alter them as occasion may demand:

Panchayat

Every Panchayat of five adult men or women being villagers or village-minded shall form a unit.

Two such contiguous Panchayats shall form a working party under a leader elected from among themselves.

When there are one hundred such Panchayats, the fifty first grade leaders shall elect from among themselves a second grade leader and so on, the first grade leaders meanwhile working under the second grade leader. Parallel groups of two hundred Panchayats shall continue to be formed till they cover the whole of India, each succeeding group of Panchayats electing second grade leader after the manner of the first. All second grade leaders shall serve jointly for the whole of India and severally for their

*Gandhiji's idea of a transformed Congress was published in *Harijan* under the title "His Last Will and Testament".

respective areas. The second grade leaders may elect, whenever they deem necessary, from among themselves a chief who will, during pleasure, regulate and command all the groups.

(As the final formation of provinces or districts is still in a state of flux, no attempt has been made to divide this group of servants into Provincial or District Councils and jurisdiction over the whole of India has been vested in the group or groups that may have been formed at any given time. It should be noted that this body of servants derive their authority or power from service ungrudgingly and wisely done to their master, the whole of India.)

Qualifications of Workers

1. Every worker shall be a habitual wearer of Khadi made from self-spun yarn or certified by the A.I.S.A., and must be a teetotaller. If a Hindu, he must have abjured untouchability in any shape or form in his own person or in his family and must be a believer in the ideal of inter-communal unity, equal respect and regard for all religions and equality of opportunity and status for all irrespective of race, creed or sex.

2. He shall come in personal contact with every villager within his jurisdiction.

3. He shall enrol and train workers from amongst the villagers and shall keep a register of all these.

4. He shall keep a record of his work from day to day.

5. He shall organize the villages so as to make them self-contained and self-supporting through their agriculture and handicrafts.

6. He shall educate the village folk in sanitation and hygiene and take all measures for prevention of ill health and disease among them.

7. He shall organize the education of the village folk from birth to death along the lines of *Nayi Talim*,

in accordance with the policy laid down by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh.

8. He shall see that those whose names are missing on the statutory voters' roll are duly entered therein.

9. He shall encourage those who have not yet acquired the legal qualification to acquire it for getting the right of franchise.

10. For the above purposes and others to be added from time to time, he shall train and fit himself in accordance with the rules laid down by the Sangh for the due performance of duty.

Constructive Organizations

The Sangh shall affiliate the following autonomous bodies:

1. A.I.S.A.,
2. A.I.V.I.A.,
3. Hindustani Talimi Sangh,
4. Harijan Sevak Sangh,
5. Goseva Sangh.

Finance

The Sangh shall raise finances for the fulfilment of its mission from among the villagers and others, special stress being laid on the collection of poor man's pice.²¹⁵

74. POPULAR MINISTRIES

Creation of Ministries

IT WOULD be decidedly wrong to create ministerships for the sake of conciliating interests. If I were a Prime Minister and I was pestered with such claims, I should tell my electors to choose another leader. These offices have to be held lightly, not tightly. They are or should be crowns of thorns, never of renown. Offices have to be taken in order to see if they enable us to quicken the pace at which we are moving towards our goal.

It would be tragic if self-seekers or misguided zealots were allowed to impede the progress by imposing themselves on Prime Ministers. If it was necessary to have assurance from those who have ultimately to clothe ministers with authority, it is doubly necessary to have assurances of understanding, of loyalty beyond suspicion and of willing obedience to discipline.

And lastly, the acid test is that the choice must commend itself to the members of the party to whom the Prime Ministers owe their nomination. No Prime Minister can for one moment impose a man or woman of his choice on the party. He is chief because he enjoys the full confidence of his party as to ability, knowledge of persons and other qualities that mark out one for leadership.²¹⁶

The ministers and the legislators of the Congress ticket have to be fearless in the performance of their duty. They must always be ready to risk the loss of their seats or offices. Offices and seats in the legislatures have no merit outside their ability to raise the prestige and power of the Congress. And since both depend wholly upon the possession of morals, both public and private, any moral lapse means a blow to the Congress. This is the necessary implication of non-violence.²¹⁷

A minister no doubt advances his own party, but never at the expense of the nation as a whole. Indeed, he

advances the Congress only so far as he advances the nation. For he knows that, if he has no sword to give battle to the foreign ruler, he has it not to give battle to his adversary within the nation itself. And since the Assembly is the place where all communities meet willy-nilly, it is the place where, by winning over his opponents, he expects to forge sanctions which can be made irresistible. All the problems that affect the body politic, including communal unity, can be solved if the Assembly is regarded . . . as an instrument to be used for solving questions. . . .²¹⁸

There is a beauty and an art in simplicity which he who runs may see. It does not require money to be neat, clean and dignified. Pomp and pageantry are often synonymous with vulgarity.²¹⁹

This office-holding is a step towards either greater prestige or its total loss. If it is not to be a total loss, the ministers and the legislators have to be watchful of their own personal and public conduct. They have to be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion in everything.

They may not make private gains either for themselves or for their relatives or friends. If the relatives or friends get any appointment, it must be only because they are the best amongst the candidates, and their market value is always greater than what they get under the Government.²²⁰

Code for Ministers

The holding of any office in the Congress Government must be in the spirit of service without the slightest expectation of personal gain.²²¹

If the Congress wants to continue as a people's organization, the ministers cannot live as *sahib log* nor use for private work facilities provided by Government for official duties.²²²

Ministers should not be sensitive [to public criticism]. They would take in good part even carping criticism. . . . The critics expect much more from these chosen servants of the people than from others in the way of simplicity, courage, honesty and industry. . . .²²³

Our ministers are of the people, from the people. Let them not arrogate to themselves greater knowledge than those experienced men who do not happen to occupy ministerial chairs.²²⁴

The leaders have the reins of Government and the disposal of millions of rupees is in their hands. They have to be vigilant. They must be humble. People often think nothing of not keeping their word. They should never promise what they cannot do. Once a promise is made, it must be kept at all cost.²²⁵

The ministers are [the people's] servants. They can do nothing against the express wishes of the people. They will not stay in office a day longer than the people wish.²²⁶

Legislatures

Let us examine the utility value of legislatures. The legislatures can expose the Government, but that is the least service. He who can tell the people why they become victims of the Government in spite of knowing its faults and can teach them how to stand up against Government wrongs renders a real service. The members cannot do this essential service, for their business is to make people look to them for the redress of wrongs.

The other use of legislatures is to prevent undesirable legislation and bring in laws which are useful for the public, so that as much help as possible can be given to the constructive programme.

Legislatures are supposed to carry out the popular will. For the moment eloquence may be of some use in these bodies. Ultimately that will not be the need. Experts with practical knowledge and those who can give to these few their support will be required. In an organization which exists for the sake of service and which has boycotted titles and other such paltry things, the sentiment that to be selected as candidates for the legislatures is a mark of honour is harmful. If such a sentiment takes root, it will bring down the name of the Congress and finally prove its ruin.

If Congressmen are to be reduced to such degradation, who will put flesh and blood into India's millions of skeletons? On whom will India and the world rely?²²⁷

A popular ministry is responsible to the legislatures and cannot do anything without their consent. Every elected member in a popular legislature is responsible to his voters. Therefore, the voter who represents the public should ponder well before embarking on any criticism of the government of his creation.

Moreover, one bad habit of the people should be borne in mind. They do not like any tax whatsoever. Where there is good government, the tax-payer gets full return for his money as, for example, the water tax in cities. No tax-payer could get water on his own for the same payment. But even so, and in spite of the fact that the tax is levied by the popular will, tax-payers always resent even paying such taxes.

It is, of course, true that one cannot prove the benefit of all taxes as easily as the one I have cited as an example. But as society grows in size and complexity and the field of service also grows, it is difficult to explain to the individual tax-payer how he gets his return for any particular tax. This much, however, is clear that taxes as a whole should stand for the general benefit of society. If this were not so, the argument that the taxes were levied by popular will would not hold.²²⁸

75. INDIA OF MY DREAMS

INDIA, BY finding true independence and self-expression through Hindu-Muslim unity and through non-violent means, i.e., unadulterated self-sacrifice, can point a way out of the prevailing darkness.²²⁹

If *vox populi* is to be *vox Dei*, it must be the voice of honesty, bravery, gentleness, humility and complete self-sacrifice.²³⁰

I believe that nothing remains static. Human nature either goes up or goes down. Let us hope in India, it is going up. Otherwise, there is nothing but deluge for India and, probably, for the whole world. . . .

Will a free India present to the world a lesson of peace, or of hatred and violence, of which the world is already sick unto death?²³¹

If the whole of India accepted this [eternal law of love], India will become the unquestioned leader of the whole world. . . . I merely wish to suggest that there should be no surrender except to reason.²³²

New India

I am only hoping and praying. . . [that there] will rise a new and robust India, not warlike, basely imitating the West in all its hideousness, but a new India learning the best that the West has to give and becoming the hope, not only of Asia and Africa, but the whole of the aching world.

I must confess that this is hoping against hope, for we are today swearing by the military and all that naked physical force implies. . . . In spite, however, of the madness and the vain imitation of the tinsel of the West, the hope lingers in me and many others that India shall survive this death dance and occupy the moral height that should belong to her after the training, however

imperfect, in non-violence for an unbroken period of thirty-two years since 1915.²³³

'Paradise on Earth'

I remember to have read, I forgot whether in the Delhi or the Agra Fort, when I visited them in 1896, a verse on one of the gates, which when translated, reads: 'If there is paradise on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here.' That Fort, with all its magnificence at its best, was no paradise in my estimation. But I should love to see that verse with justice inscribed on the gates of Pakistan at all the entrances. In such paradise, whether it is in the Union or in Pakistan, there will be neither paupers nor beggars, nor high nor low, neither millionaire employers nor half-starved employees, nor intoxicating drinks nor drugs. There will be the same respect for women as vouchsafed to men, and the chastity and purity of men and women will be jealously guarded, where every woman, except one's wife, will be treated by men of all religions, as mother, sister or daughter according to her age, where there will be no untouchability and where there will be equal respect for all faiths. They will be all proudly, joyously and voluntarily bread labourers.²³⁴

76. BACK TO THE VILLAGE

Real India

I HAVE believed and repeated times without number that India is to be found not in its few cities but in its 7,00,000 villages. We town-dwellers have believed that India is to be found in its towns and the villages were created to minister to our needs. We have hardly ever paused to inquire if those poor folk get sufficient to eat and clothe themselves with and whether they have a roof to shelter themselves from sun and rain.²³⁵

Hitherto the villagers have died in their thousands so that we might live. Now we might have to die so that they may live. The difference will be fundamental. The former have died unknowingly and involuntarily. Their enforced sacrifice has degraded us. If now we die knowingly, our sacrifice will ennoble us and the whole nation. Let us not flinch from the necessary sacrifice, if we will live as an independent, self-respecting nation.²³⁶

Villages and Cities

The cities are capable of taking care of themselves. It is the villages we have to turn to. We have to disabuse them of their prejudices, their superstitions, their narrow outlook, and we can do so in no other manner than that of staying amongst them and sharing their joys and sorrows and spreading education and intelligent information among them.²³⁷

I have found that the town-dweller has generally exploited the villager, in fact he has lived on the poor villager's subsistence. Many a British official has written about the conditions of the people of India. No one has, to my knowledge, said that the Indian villager has enough to keep body and soul together. On the contrary, they have admitted that the bulk of the population live on the verge of starvation and ten per cent are semi-starved, and

that millions have to rest content with a pinch of dirty salt and chillies and polished rice or parched grain.

You may be sure that, if any of us were to be asked to live on that diet, we should not expect to survive it longer than a month or should be afraid of losing our mental faculties. And yet our villagers go through that state from day to day.²³⁸

The Peasants

The moment you talk to them [the Indian peasants] and they begin to speak, you will find wisdom drops from their lips. Behind the crude exterior you will find a deep reservoir of spirituality. I call this culture—you will not find such a thing in the West. You try to engage an European peasant in conversation and you will find that he is uninterested in things spiritual.

In the case of the Indian villager, an age-old culture is hidden under an encrustment of crudeness. Take away the encrustation, remove his chronic poverty and his illiteracy and you will find the finest specimen of what a cultured, cultivated, free citizen should be.²³⁹

Over 75 per cent of the population are agriculturists. . . . But there cannot be much spirit of self-government about us if we take away or allow others to take away from them almost the whole of the result of their labour.²⁴⁰

It is only when the cities realize the duty of making an adequate return to the villages for the strength and sustenance which they derive from them, instead of selfishly exploiting them, that a healthy and moral relationship between the two will spring up. And if the city children are to play their part in this great and noble work of social reconstruction, the vocations through which they are to receive their education ought to be directly related to the requirements of the villages.²⁴¹

I regard the growth of cities as an evil thing, unfortunate for mankind and the world, unfortunate for England and certainly unfortunate for India. The British have exploited India through its cities. The latter have exploited the villages. The blood of the villages is the

cement with which the edifice of the cities is built. I want the blood that is today inflating the arteries of the cities to run once again in the blood vessels of the villages.²⁴²

... I know that, if India is to be the leader in clean action based on clean thought, God will confound the wisdom of ... big men and will provide the villages with the power to express themselves as they should.²⁴³

India is made of villages, but our intelligentsia has neglected them. . . . Village life must not become a copy or appendage of city life. The cities have to adopt the pattern of village life and subsist for the villages.²⁴⁴

Our Duty

We must identify ourselves with the villagers who toil under the hot sun beating on their bent backs and see how we would like to drink water from the pool in which the villagers bathe, wash their clothes and pots, and in which their cattle drink and roll. Then and not till then shall we truly represent the masses and they will, as surely as I am writing this, respond to every call.²⁴⁵

We have got to be ideal villagers, not the villagers with their queer ideas or absence of ideas about sanitation and giving no thought to how they eat and what they eat. Let us not, like most of them, cook anyhow, eat anyhow, live anyhow. Let us show them the ideal diet. Let us not go by mere likes and dislikes, but get at the root of these likes and dislikes. . . .

We have got to show them that they can grow their vegetables, their greens, without much expense, and keep good health. We have also to show that most of the vitamins are lost when they cook the leaves. . . .

We have to teach them how to economize time, health and money. . . . Lionel Curtis described our villages as dungheaps. We have to turn them into model villages. Our village-folk do not get fresh air though they are surrounded by fresh air; they don't get fresh food though they are surrounded by the freshest foods. I am talking like a missionary in this matter of food, because my mission is to make villages a thing of beauty.²⁴⁶

The only way is to sit down in their midst and work away in steadfast faith, as their scavengers, their nurses, their servants, not as their patrons, and to forget all our prejudices and prepossessions. Let us for a moment forget even Swaraj, and certainly forget the 'haves' whose presence oppresses us at every step. They are there. There are many who are dealing with these big problems. Let us tackle the humbler work of the village which is necessary now and would be, even after we have reached our goal. Indeed, the village work when it becomes successful will itself bring us nearer the goal.²⁴⁷

Village Movement

The village movement is as much an education of the city people as of the villagers. Workers drawn from cities have to develop village mentality and learn the art of living after the manner of villagers. This does not mean that they have to starve like the villagers. But it does mean that there must be a radical change in the old style of life.²⁴⁸

In [my picture of independence], the unit is the village community. The superstructure of independence is not to be built at the village unit, so that the top weighs down on and crushes the forty crores of people who constitute the base. . . .

A village unit as conceived by me is as strong as the strongest. My imaginary village consists of 1,000 souls. Such a unit can give a good account of itself if it is well organized on a basis of self-sufficiency.²⁴⁹

We stand today in danger of forgetting how to use our hands. To forget how to dig the earth and tend the soil is to forget ourselves. To think that your occupation of the Ministerial chair will be vindicated if you serve the cities only would be to forget that India really resides in her 7,00,000 village units. What would it profit a man if he gained the world but lost his soul into the bargain?²⁵⁰

77. ALL-ROUND VILLAGE SERVICE

THE REAL India lies in the 7,00,000 villages. If Indian civilization is to make its full contribution to the building up of a stable world order, it is this vast mass of humanity that has . . . to be made to live again.²⁵¹

We have to tackle the triple malady which holds our villages fast in its grip : (i) want of corporate sanitation; (ii) deficient diet; (iii) inertia. . . . They [villagers] are not interested in their own welfare. They don't appreciate modern sanitary methods. They don't want to exert themselves beyond scratching their farms or doing such labour as they are used to. These difficulties are real and serious. But they must not baffle us.

We must have an unquenchable faith in our mission. We must be patient with the people. We are ourselves novices in village work. We have to deal with a chronic disease. Patience and perseverance, if we have them, overcome mountains of difficulties. We are like nurses who may not leave their patients because they are reported to have an incurable disease.²⁵²

Villages have suffered long from neglect by those who have had the benefit of education. They have chosen the city life. The village movement is an attempt to establish healthy contact with the villages by inducing those who are fired with the spirit of service to settle in them and find self-expression in the service of villagers. . . .

Those who have settled in villages in the spirit of service are not dismayed by the difficulties facing them. They knew before they went that they would have to contend against many difficulties, including even sullenness on the part of villagers. Only those, therefore, who have

faith in themselves and in their mission will serve the villagers and influence their lives.

Workers

A true life lived amongst the people is in itself an object-lesson that must produce its own effect upon immediate surroundings. The difficulty with the young man is, perhaps, that he has gone to the village merely to earn a living without the spirit of service behind it.

I admit that village life does not offer attractions to those who go there in search of money. Without the incentive of service village life would jar after the novelty has worn out. No young man having gone to a village may abandon the pursuit on the slightest contact with difficulty. Patient effort will show that villagers are not very different from city-dwellers and that they will respond to kindness and attention.

It is no doubt true that one does not have in the villages the opportunity of contact with the great ones of the land. With the growth of village mentality the leaders will find it necessary to tour in the villages and establish a living touch with them. Moreover, the companionship of the great and the good is available to all through the works of saints like Chaitanya, Ramakrishna, Tulsidas, Kabir, Nanak, Dadu, Tukaram, Tiruvalluvar, and others too numerous to mention, though equally known and pious.

Literature

The difficulty is to get the mind tuned to the reception of permanent values. If it is modern thought—political, social, economic, scientific—that is meant, it is possible to procure literature that will satisfy curiosity. I admit, however, that one does not find such as easily as one finds religious literature. Saints wrote and spoke for the masses. The vogue for translating modern thought to the masses in an acceptable manner has not yet quite set in. But it must come in time.

I would, therefore, advise young men . . . not to give in, but persist in their effort and by their presence

make the villages more livable and lovable. That they will do by serving the villages in a manner acceptable to the villagers. Everyone can make a beginning by making the villages cleaner by their own labour and removing illiteracy to the extent of their ability. And if their lives are clean, methodical and industrious, there is no doubt that the infection will spread in the villages in which they may be working.²⁵³

Samagra Gramaseva

A Samagra Gramasevak must know everybody living in the village and render them such service as he can. That does not mean that the worker will be able to do everything single-handed. He will show them the way of helping themselves and procure for them such help and materials as they require. He will train up his own helpers. He will so win over the villagers that they will seek and follow his advice.

Supposing I go and settle down in a village with a *ghani* (village oil press), I won't be an ordinary *ghanchi* (oil presser) earning 15-20 rupees a month. I will be a Mahatma *ghanchi*. I have used the word 'Mahatma' in fun, but what I mean to say is that as a *ghanchi* I will become a model for the villagers to follow. I will be a *ghanchi* who knows the Gita and the Quran. I will be learned enough to teach their children. I may not be able to do so for lack of time. The villagers will come to me and ask me: "Please make arrangements for our children's education." I will tell them: "I can find you a teacher, but you will have to bear the expenses." And they will be prepared to do so most willingly.

I will teach them spinning and when they come and ask me for the services of a weaver, I will find them a weaver on the same terms as I found them a teacher. And the weaver will teach them how to weave their own cloth. I will inculcate in them the importance of hygiene and sanitation, and when they come and ask me for a sweeper, I will tell them: "I will be your sweeper and I will train you all in the job."

This is my conception of Samagra Gramaseva. You may tell me that I will never find a *ghanchi* of this description in this age. Then I will say that we cannot hope to improve our villages in this age. . . . After all, the man who runs an oil mill is a *ghanchi*. He has money but his strength does not lie in his money. Real strength lies in knowledge. True knowledge gives a moral standing and moral strength. Everyone seeks the advice of such a man.²⁵⁴

Economic Survey

The villages will be surveyed and a list prepared of things that can be manufactured locally with little or no help which may be required for village use or for sale outside, such for instance as *ghani*-pressed oil and cakes, burning oil prepared through *ghanis*, hand-pounded rice, *tadgud*, honey, toys, mats, hand-made paper, village soap, etc. If enough care is thus taken, the villages, most of them as good as dead or dying, will hum with life and exhibit the immense possibilities they have of supplying most of their wants themselves and of the cities and towns of India.²⁵⁵

Arts and Crafts

The villagers should develop such a high degree of skill that articles prepared by them should command a ready market outside. When our villages are fully developed, there will be no dearth in them of men with a high degree of skill and artistic talent. There will be village poets, village artists, village architects, linguists and research workers. In short, there will be nothing in life worth having which will not be had in the villages.

Today the villages are dung heaps. Tomorrow they will be like tiny gardens of Eden where dwell highly intelligent folk whom no one can deceive or exploit. The reconstruction of the villages along these lines should begin right now. . . . The reconstruction of the villages should not be organized on a temporary but permanent basis.²⁵⁶

Economic Reorganization

In my writing on cent per cent Swadeshi, I have shown how some aspects of it can be tackled immediately with benefit to the starving millions both economically and hygienically. The richest in the land can share the benefit. Thus, if rice can be pounded in the villages after the old fashion, the wages will fill the pockets of the rice-pounding sisters and the rice-eating millions will get some sustenance from the unpolished rice instead of pure starch which the polished rice provides.

Human greed, which takes no account of the health or the wealth of the people who come under its heels, is responsible for the hideous rice-mills one sees in all the rice-producing tracts. If public opinion was strong, it will make rice-mills an impossibility by simply insisting on unpolished rice and appealing to the owners of rice-mills to stop a traffic that undermines the health of a whole nation and robs the poor of an honest means of livelihood.²⁵⁷

... I would say that, if the village perishes, India will perish too. India will be no more India. Her own mission in the world will get lost. The revival of the village is possible only when it is no more exploited. Industrialization on a mass scale will necessarily lead to passive or active exploitation of the villagers as the problems of competition and marketing come in.

Therefore, we have to concentrate on the village being self-contained, manufacturing mainly for use. Provided this character of the village industry is maintained, there would be no objection to villagers using even the modern machines and tools that they can make and can afford to use. Only, they should not be used as a means of exploitation of others.²⁵⁸

Non-violent Economy

You cannot build non-violence on a factory civilization, but it can be built on self-contained villages. ... Rural economy as I have conceived it, eschews exploitation altogether, and exploitation is the essence of violence. You have, therefore, to be rural-minded before you can be

non-violent, and to be rural-minded you have to have faith in the spinning wheel.²⁵⁹

We have to make a choice between India of the villages that are as ancient as herself and India of the cities which are a creation of foreign domination. Today the cities dominate and drain the villages so that they are crumbling to ruin. My Khadi mentality tells me that cities must subserve villages when that domination goes. Exploiting of villages is itself organized violence. If we want Swaraj to be built on non-violence, we will have to give the villages their proper place.²⁶⁰

Food Reform

Since the economic reorganization of the villages has been commenced with food reform, it is necessary to find out the simplest and cheapest foods that would enable the villagers to regain the lost health. The addition of green leaves to their meals will enable the villagers to avoid many diseases from which they are now suffering.

The villagers' food is deficient in vitamins; many of them can be supplied by fresh green leaves. An eminent doctor told me a proper use of green leaves is calculated to revolutionize the customary notions of food and much of what was today being supplied by milk may be supplied by green leaves.²⁶¹

Power Machinery

If we could have electricity in every village home, I should not mind villagers plying their implements and tools, with the help of electricity. But then the village communities or the State would own power-houses just as they have their grazing pastures. But where there is no electricity and no machinery, what are idle hands to do?²⁶²

I regard the existence of power wheels for the grinding of corn in thousands of villages as the limit of our helplessness. I suppose India does not produce all the engines or grinding machines. . . . The planting of such machinery and engines on a large scale in villages is also a sign of greed. Is it proper to fill one's pocket in this manner at the expense of the poor? Every such machinery puts thousands

of hand-*chakkis* out of work and takes away employment from thousands of housewives and artisans who make these *chakkis*.

Moreover, the process is infective and will spread to every village industry. The decay of the latter spells too the decay of art. If it meant replacement of old crafts by new ones, one might not have much to say against it. But this is not what is happening. In the thousands of villages where power machinery exists, one misses the sweet music, in the early morning, of the grinders at work.²⁶³

78. PANCHAYAT RAJ

Village Republics

INDIA HAS had experience of . . . village republics, as they were called by Mayne. I fancy that they were unconsciously governed by non-violence. . . . An effort has now to be made to revive them under a deliberate non-violent plan.²⁶⁴

The best, quickest and most efficient way is to build up from the bottom. . . . Every village has to become a self-sufficient republic. This does not require brave resolutions. It requires brave, corporate, intelligent work. . . .²⁶⁵

Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic or Panchayat having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world. It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Thus, ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit.

This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbours or from the world. It will be free and voluntary play of mutual forces. Such a society is necessarily highly cultured in which every man and woman

knows what he or she wants and, what is more, knows that no one should want anything that others cannot have with equal labour.

This society must naturally be based on truth and non-violence which, in my opinion, are not possible without a living belief in God, meaning a Self-existent, All-knowing Living Force which inheres every other force known to the world and which depends on none and which will live when all other forces may conceivably perish or cease to act. I am unable to account for my life without belief in this all-embracing living Light.

Widening Circles

In this structure composed of innumerable villages there will be ever-widening, never-ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance, but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

Therefore, the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle, but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it. I may be taunted with the retort that this is all Utopian and, therefore, not worth a single thought. If Euclid's point, though incapable of being drawn by human agency, has an imperishable value, my picture has its own for mankind to live.

The Ideal

Let India live for this true picture, though never realizable in its completeness. We must have a proper picture of what we want before we can have something approaching it. If there ever is to be a republic of every village in

India, then I claim verity for my picture in which the last is equal to the first or, in other words, none is to be the first and none the last.

In this picture every religion has its full and equal place. We are all leaves of a majestic tree whose trunk cannot be shaken off its roots which are deep down in the bowels of the earth. The mightiest wind cannot move it.

In this there is no room for machines that would displace human labour and would concentrate power in a few hands. Labour has its unique place in a cultured human family. Every machine that helps every individual has a place. But I must confess that I have never sat down to think out what that machine can be. I have thought of Singer's sewing machine. But even that is perfunctory. I do not need it to fill in my picture.²⁶⁶

I know that the work [of making an ideal village] is as difficult as to make of India an ideal country. But, while it is possible for one man to fulfil his ambition with respect to a single village some day, one man's lifetime is too short to overtake the whole of India. But if one man can produce one ideal village, he will have provided a pattern not only for the whole country, but perhaps for the whole world. More than this a seeker may not aspire after.²⁶⁷

Under Village Republics

I have not pictured a poverty-stricken India containing ignorant millions. I have pictured to myself an India continually progressing along the lines best suited to her genius. I do not, however, picture it as a third-class or even a first-class copy of the dying civilization of the West.

If my dream is fulfilled, and every one of the seven lakhs of villages becomes a well-living republic in which there are no illiterates, in which no one is idle for want of work, in which everyone is usefully occupied and has nourishing food, well-ventilated dwellings, and sufficient

Khadi for covering the body, and in which all the villagers know and observe the laws of hygiene and sanitation, such a State must have varied and increasing needs, which it must supply unless it would stagnate.²⁶⁸

Village Swaraj

My idea of village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is necessary. Thus, every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops, and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children. Then, if there is more land available, it will grow *useful* money crops, thus excluding *ganja*, tobacco, opium and the like.

The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own waterworks ensuring clean water supply. This can be done through controlled wells or tanks. Education will be compulsory up to the final Basic course. As far as possible, every activity will be conducted on the co-operative basis. There will be no castes such as we have today with their graded untouchability.

Non-violence with its technique of Satyagraha and non-co-operation will be the sanction of the village community. There will be a compulsory service of village guards who will be selected by rotation from the register maintained by the village.

Government of Village

The government of the village will be conducted by the Panchayat of five persons, annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishments in the accepted sense, this Panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office. . . .

I have not examined here the question of relations with the neighbouring villages and the centre if any. My purpose is to present an outline of village government. Here

there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own government. The law of non-violence rules him and his government. He and his village are able to defy the might of a world. For the law governing every villager is that he will suffer death in the defence of his and his village's honour. . . .

There is nothing inherently impossible in the picture drawn here. To model such a village may be the work of a lifetime. Any lover of true democracy and village life can take up a village, treat it as his world and sole work, and he will find good results.²⁶⁹

Public Opinion

When Panchayat Raj is established, public opinion will do what violence can never do. The present power of the zamindars, the capitalists and the rajas can hold sway so long as the common people do not realize their own strength. If the people non-co-operate with the evil of zamindari or capitalism, it must die of inanition. In Panchayat Raj, only the Panchayat will be obeyed and the Panchayat can only work through the law of their making.²⁷⁰

The real rulers are the toiling millions.²⁷¹

Kisan—the Backbone

In Panchayat Raj, the man who should count most in India is naturally the kisan. How to advance him is the question.²⁷²

The greater the power of the Panchayats the better for the people. Moreover, Panchayats to be effective and efficient, the level of people's education has to be considerably raised. I do not conceive the increase in the power of the people in military, but in moral terms. Naturally, I swear by *Nai Talim* in this connection.²⁷³

Functions of Panchayat

It is the function of the Panchayats to revive honesty and industry. . . . It is the function of the Panchayats to teach the villagers to avoid disputes, if they have to settle them. This will ensure speedy justice without any

expenditure. You will need neither the police nor the military. . . .

Then the Panchayat should see to cattle improvement. They should show steady increase in the milk yield. . . . The Panchayat should also see to an increase in the quantity of foodstuff grown in their village. This is to be accomplished by properly manuring the soil.

You have your indigenous games. You should banish intoxicating drinks and drugs from your midst. I hope you will eradicate untouchability if there is any trace of it still in your village. The Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Parsees and the Christians should all live as brothers and sisters. If you achieve all I have mentioned, you will demonstrate real independence, and people from all over India will come to see your model village and take inspiration from it.²⁷⁴

State of Panchayat

If we would see our dream of Panchayat Raj, i.e., true democracy realized, we would regard the humblest and lowest Indian as being equally the ruler of India with the tallest in the land. This presupposes that all are pure or will become pure if they are not. And purity must go hand-in-hand with wisdom. No one would then harbour any distinction between community and community, caste and out-caste. Everybody would regard all as equal with oneself and hold them together in the silken net of love. No one would regard another as untouchable. We would hold as equal the toiling labourer and the rich capitalist. Everybody would know how to earn an honest living by the sweat of one's brow and make no distinction between intellectual and physical labour. To hasten this consummation, we would voluntarily turn ourselves into scavengers. No one who has wisdom will ever touch opium, liquor or any intoxicants. Everybody would observe Swadeshi as the rule of life and man would regard every woman, not being his wife, as his mother, sister or daughter according to her age, never lust after her in his heart. He would be ready to lay down his life when occasion demands it, never want to take another's life. . . .²⁷⁵

79. EDUCATION

THE ANCIENT aphorism, 'Education is that which liberates', is as true today as it was before. Education here does not mean mere spiritual knowledge, nor does liberation signify only spiritual liberation after death. Knowledge includes all training that is useful for the service of mankind and liberation means freedom from all manner of servitude even in the present life. Servitude is of two kinds: slavery to domination from outside and to one's own artificial needs. The knowledge acquired in the pursuit of this ideal alone constitutes true study.²⁷⁶

Knowledge of Living

Today pure water, good earth, fresh air are unknown to us. We do not know the inestimable value of ether and the sun. If we make wise use of these five powers and if we eat the proper and the balanced diet, we shall have done the work of the ages. For acquiring this knowledge, we need neither degrees nor crores of money. What we need are a living faith in God, a zeal for service, an acquaintance with the five powers of nature* and a knowledge of dietetics. All this can be acquired without wasting time in schools and colleges.²⁷⁷

Persistent questioning and healthy inquisitiveness are the first requisite for acquiring learning of any kind. Inquisitiveness should be tempered by humility and respectful regard for the teacher. It must not degenerate into impudence. The latter is the enemy of the receptivity of mind. There can be no knowledge without humility and the will to learn.²⁷⁸

Education must be of a new type for the sake of the creation of a new world.²⁷⁹

*Earth, water, ether, sunlight and air

It is not literacy or learning which makes a man, but education for real life.²⁸⁰

Side by side with adult franchise, or even before it, I plead for universal education, not necessarily literary except as, perhaps, an aid. English education, I am convinced, has starved our minds, enervated them and never prepared them for brave citizenship. I would give them all sufficient knowledge in the rich languages of which any country will be proud. Education in the understanding of citizenship is a short-term affair if we are honest and earnest.²⁸¹

Dignity of Labour

I hold that, as the largest part of our time is devoted to labour for earning our bread, our children must from their infancy be taught the dignity of such labour. Our children should not be so taught as to despise labour. There is no reason why a peasant's son, after having gone to school, should become useless, as he does become, as an agricultural labourer.²⁸²

Literary education should follow the education of the hand—the one gift that visibly distinguishes man from beast. It is a superstition to think that the fullest development of man is impossible without a knowledge of the art of reading and writing. That knowledge undoubtedly adds grace to life, but it is in no way indispensable for man's moral, physical, or material growth.²⁸³

I hold that true education of the intellect can only come through a proper exercise and training of the bodily organs, e.g., hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, etc. In other words, an intelligent use of the bodily organs in a child provides the best and quickest way of developing his intellect. But unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would prove to be a poor lopsided affair. By spiritual training I mean education of the heart. A proper and all-round development of the mind, therefore, can take place

only when it proceeds *pari passu* with the education of the physical and spiritual faculties of the child. They constitute an indivisible whole. According to this theory, therefore, it would be a gross fallacy to suppose that they can be developed piecemeal or independently of one another.

Harmonious Blend

The baneful effects of absence of proper co-ordination and harmony among the various faculties of body, mind and soul respectively are obvious. They are all around us; only we have lost perception of them owing to our present perverse associations. . . .²⁸⁴

Man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all three is required for the making of the whole man and constitutes the true economics of education.²⁸⁵

By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in the child and man—body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education. I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. . . . I hold that the highest development of the mind and the soul is possible under such a system of education. Only every handicraft has to be taught not merely mechanically as is done today, but scientifically, i.e., the child should know the why and the wherefore of every process.²⁸⁶

I attach far more importance to the cultural aspect of education than to the literary.²⁸⁷

Useful manual labour, intelligently performed is the means *par excellence* for developing the intellect. . . . A balanced intellect presupposes a harmonious growth of body, mind and soul. . . . An intellect that is developed through the medium of socially useful labour will be an instrument for service and will not easily be led astray or fall into devious paths.²⁸⁸

Nai Talim

Any basic craft to serve as a medium for education must answer the test of universality.²⁸⁹

Craft, art, health and education should all be integrated into one scheme. *Nai Talim* is a beautiful blend of all the four and covers the whole education of the individual from the time of conception to the moment of death. . . . Instead of regarding craft and industry as different from education, I will regard the former as the medium for the latter.²⁹⁰

My *Nai Talim* is not dependent on money. The running expenses should come from the educational process itself. Whatever the criticisms may be, I know that the only education is that which is 'self-supporting'.²⁹¹

It is called the new method of education, for it is not a foreign importation or imposition, but is consistent with the environment in India which is predominantly made up of villages. It believes in establishing an equilibrium between the body, the mind and the spirit of which man is made. It is unlike the Western type which is predominantly militarist, in which the mind and the body are the primary care of education to the subordination of the spirit. This is best done when education is given through handicrafts. The other speciality is that it is designed to be wholly self-supporting. It does not, therefore, demand an expenditure of millions on education.²⁹²

The teachers earn what they take. It stands for the art of living. Therefore, both the teacher and the pupil have to produce in the very act of teaching and learning. It enriches life from the commencement. It makes the nation independent of the search for employment.²⁹³

Our system of education leads to the development of the mind, body and soul. The ordinary system cares only for the mind.²⁹⁴

It is popularly and correctly described as education through handicrafts. This is part of the truth. The root of this new education goes much deeper. It lies in the

application of truth and love in every variety of human activity, whether in individual life or a corporate one. The notion of education through handicrafts rises from the contemplation of truth and love permeating life's activities. Love requires that true education should be easily accessible to all, and should be of use to every villager in his daily life. Such education is not derived from, nor does it depend upon, books. It has no relation to sectional religion. If it can be called religious, it is universal religion from which all sectional religions are derived. Therefore, it is learnt from the Book of Life which costs nothing and which cannot be taken away from one by any force on earth.²⁹⁵

University Education

The aim of university education should be to turn out true servants of the people who will live and die for the country's freedom. I am therefore of opinion that university education should be co-ordinated and brought into line with basic education. . . .²⁹⁶

As for women's education, I am not sure whether it should be different from men's and when it should begin. But I am strongly of opinion that women should have the same facilities as men and even special facilities where necessary.²⁹⁷

I have never been an advocate of our students going abroad. My experience tells me that such, on return, find themselves to be square pegs in round holes. That experience is the richest and contributes most to growth which springs from the soil.²⁹⁸

Code for Students

Agitation is only for those who have completed their studies. While studying, the only occupation of students must be to increase their knowledge. . . . All education in a country has got to be demonstrably in promotion of the progress of the country in which it is given.²⁹⁹

The students should be, above all, humble and correct. . . . The greatest to be great has to be the lowliest by choice.

If I can speak from my knowledge of Hindu belief, the life of a student is to correspond to the life of a *sannyasi* up to the time his studies end. He is to be under the strictest discipline. He cannot marry, nor indulge in dissipation. He cannot indulge in drinks and the like. His behaviour is to be a pattern of exemplary self-restraint.³⁰⁰

Medium of Instruction

I find daily proof of the increasing and continuing wrong being done to the millions by our false de-Indianizing education. . . .

We seem to have come to think that no one can hope to be like a Bose unless he knows English. I cannot conceive a grosser superstition than this. No Japanese feels so helpless as we seem to do. . . .

The medium of instruction should be altered at once and at any cost, the provincial languages being given their rightful place. I would prefer temporary chaos in higher education to the criminal waste that is daily accumulating.

In order to enhance the status and the market-value of the provincial languages, I would have the language of the law courts to be the language of the province where the court is situated. The proceedings of the provincial Legislatures must be in the language, or even the languages, of the province where a province has more than one language, within its borders. . . . At the centre Hindustani must rule supreme.

In my opinion, this is not a question to be decided by academicians. . . . When this country becomes really free, the question of medium will be settled only one way. The academicians will frame the syllabus and prepare textbooks accordingly. And the products of the education of a free India will answer the requirements of the country. . . . So long as we, the educated classes, play with this question, I very much fear we shall not produce the free and healthy India of our dream. We have to grow by strenuous effort out of our bondage, whether it is educational, economic, social or political. The effort itself is three-fourths of the battle.³⁰¹

I have no doubt whatsoever that, if those who have the education of the youth in their hands will but make up their minds, they will discover that the mother tongue is as natural for the development of man's mind as mother's milk is for the development of the infant's body. How can it be otherwise? The babe takes its first lesson from its mother. I, therefore, regard it as a sin against the motherland to inflict upon her children a tongue other than their mother's for their mental development.³⁰²

National Language

The interprovincial language . . . can only be Hindustani written in Nagari or Urdu script. . . .

My plea is for banishing English as a cultural usurper, as we successfully banished the political rule of the English usurper. The rich English language will ever retain its natural place as the international speech of commerce and diplomacy.³⁰³

The re-distribution of provinces on a linguistic basis is necessary if provincial languages are to grow to their full height. Hindustani is to be the lingua franca—Rashtra Bhasha—of India, but it cannot take the place of the provincial tongues. It cannot be the medium of instruction in the provinces—much less English. Its function is to make them realize their organic relationship with India.³⁰⁴

English Language

The highest development of the Indian mind must be possible without a knowledge of English.³⁰⁵

It is my considered opinion that English education in the manner it has been given has emasculated the English-educated Indians, it has put a severe strain upon the Indian students' nervous energy, and has made of us imitators. . . . No country can become a nation by producing a race of translators.³⁰⁶

English is today admittedly the world language. I would therefore accord it a place as a second, optional language, not in the school, but in the university course. That can only be for the select few—not for the millions. . . .

It is our mental slavery that makes us feel that we cannot do without English. I can never subscribe to that defeatist creed.³⁰⁷

Literature

I must not be understood to decry English or its noble literature. The columns of the *Harijan* are sufficient evidence of my love of English. But the nobility of its literature cannot avail the Indian nation any more than the temperate climate or the scenery of England can avail her. India has to flourish in her own climate, and scenery, and her own literature, even though all the three may be inferior to the English climate, scenery and literature. We and our children must build on our own heritage. If we borrow another, we impoverish our own. We can never grow on foreign victuals. I want the nation to have the treasures contained in that language and, for that matter, in other languages of the world, through its own vernaculars. I do not need to learn Bengali in order to know the beauties of Rabindranath's matchless productions. I get them through good translations. Gujarati boys and girls do not need to learn Russian to appreciate Tolstoy's short stories. They learn them through good translations. It is the boast of Englishmen that the best of the world's literary output is in the hands of that nation in simple English inside of a week of its publication. Why need I learn English to get at the best of what Shakespeare and Milton thought and wrote?³⁰⁸

80. LINGUISTIC PROVINCES

I WAS principally instrumental in securing from the Congress the recognition of the redistribution of the provinces for Congress purposes, on a linguistic basis. I have always agitated for the acceptance by the government of such redistribution.³⁰⁹

I believe that the linguistic basis is the correct basis for demarcating provinces. I should not mind two provinces speaking the same language, if they are not contiguous. If Kerala and Karnatak were speaking the same language, I would treat them as two distinct provinces.³¹⁰

Provincial Universities

I do believe that there should be such universities if . . . rich provincial languages and the people who speak them are to attain their full height. At the same time I fear that we betray ourselves into undue haste in accomplishing the object. The first step should be linguistic political redistribution of provinces.³¹¹

The exclusive spirit is ever uppermost. Everyone thinks of himself and his family. No one thinks of the whole of India. The centripetal force is undoubtedly there, but it is not vocal, never boisterous; whereas the centrifugal is on the surface, and in its very nature makes the loudest noise, demanding the attention of all. It manifests itself in matters communal. This has given rise to fear in other fields. . . .

Even zealous reformers would postpone controversial issues to a more hopeful time when, in the interest of the country, the virtue of 'give and take' would be freely recognized and all sectional interests would be subordinate to the one interest of the good of India, which will include the good of all.

Therefore, those who, like me, want constructive suggestions to come into play at this very moment, have to work to bring about a healthy atmosphere, promoting concord in the place of discord, peace in the place of strife, progress in the place of retrogression and life in the place of death.³¹²

No Exclusive Provincialism

I hold that the people of all the provinces belong to India and India belongs to all. The only condition is that no one can go and settle in another province to exploit it or rule it or to injure its interest in any way. All are servants of India and they live only in the spirit of service.³¹³

The bane of our life is our exclusive provincialism, whereas my province must be co-extensive with the Indian boundary so that ultimately it extends to the boundary of the earth. Else it perishes.³¹⁴

Unity of India

The Congress has already adopted that principle [of reconstitution of provinces on a linguistic basis] and has declared its intention to give effect to it constitutionally as soon as they came to power; as such, redistribution will be conducive to the cultural advancement of the country. But such redistribution should not militate against the organic unity of India. Autonomy does not and should not mean disruption, or that hereafter provinces could go the way they chose, independent of one another and of the Centre. If each province begins to look upon itself as a separate, sovereign unit, India's independence will lose its meaning and with it will vanish the freedom of the various units as well. . . .

The world outside does not know us as Gujaratis, Maharashtri[an]s, Tamilians etc., but only as Indians.

We must, therefore, resolutely discourage all fissiparous tendencies and feel and behave as Indians. Subject to this paramount consideration, a linguistic redistribution of provinces should give an impetus to education and trade.³¹⁵

81. COW PROTECTION

Place of the Cow

THE cow is a poem of pity. One reads pity in the gentle animal. She is the mother to millions of Indian mankind. Protection of the cow means protection of the whole dumb creation of God. The ancient seer, whoever he was, began with the cow. The appeal of the lower order of creation is all the more forcible because it is speechless.³¹⁶

... The cow is the purest type of sub-human life. She pleads before us on behalf of the whole of the sub-human species for justice to it at the hands of man, the first among all that lives. She seems to speak to us through her eyes: 'You are not appointed over us to kill us and eat our flesh or otherwise ill-treat us, but to be our friend and guardian.'³¹⁷

I worship it and I shall defend its worship against the whole world.³¹⁸

Mother cow is in many ways better than the mother who gave us birth. Our mother gives us milk for a couple of years and then expects us to serve her when we grow up. Mother cow expects from us nothing but grass and grain. Our mother often falls ill and expects service from us. Mother cow rarely falls ill.

Here is an unbroken record of service which does not end with her death. Our mother, when she dies, means expenses of burial or cremation. Mother cow is as useful dead as when she is alive. We can make use of every part of her body—her flesh, her bones, her intestines, her horns and her skin. Well, I say this not to disparage the mother who gives us birth, but in order to show you the substantial reasons for my worshipping the cow.³¹⁹

The Cow in Hinduism

The central fact of Hinduism is cow protection. Cow protection to me is one of the most wonderful phenomena in human evolution. It takes the human being beyond his species. The cow to me means the entire sub-human world. Man through the cow is enjoined to realize his identity with all that lives. Why the cow was selected for apotheosis is obvious to me. The cow was in India the best companion. She was the giver of plenty. Not only did she give milk, but she also made agriculture possible. . . .

Cow protection is the gift of Hinduism to the world. And Hinduism will live so long as there are Hindus to protect the cow. . . .

Hindus will be judged not by their *tilaks*, not by the correct chanting of *mantras*, not by their pilgrimages, not by their most punctilious observances of caste rules, but their ability to protect the cow.³²⁰

Cow-slaughter

I would not kill a human being for protecting a cow, as I will not kill a cow for saving a human life, be it ever so precious.³²¹

My religion teaches me that I should by personal conduct instil into the minds of those who might hold different views, the conviction that cow-killing is a sin and that, therefore, it ought to be abandoned.³²²

Cow slaughter can never be stopped by law. Knowledge, education, and the spirit of kindness towards her alone can put an end to it. It will not be possible to save those animals that are a burden on the land or, perhaps, even man if he is a burden.³²³

My ambition is no less than to see the principle of cow protection established throughout the world. But that requires that I should set my own house thoroughly in order first.³²⁴

Cow protection to me is not mere protection of the cow. It means protection of all that lives and is helpless and weak in the world.³²⁵

But let me reiterate . . . that legislative prohibition is the smallest part of any programme of cow protection. . . . People seem to think that, when a law is passed against any evil, it will die without any further effort. There never was a grosser self-deception. Legislation is intended and is effective against an ignorant or a small, evil-minded minority; but no legislation which is opposed by an intelligent and organized public opinion, or under cover of religion by a fanatical minority, can ever succeed.

The more I study the question of cow protection, the stronger the conviction grows upon me that protection of the cow and her progeny can be attained only if there is continuous and sustained constructive effort along the lines suggested by me.³²⁶

Goseva

Preservation of cattle is a vital part of *Goseva*. It is a vital question for India. . . . There is urgent need for deep study and the spirit of sacrifice. To amass money and dole out charity does not connote real business capacity. To know how to preserve cattle, to impart this knowledge to the millions, to live up to the ideal oneself, and to spend money on this endeavour is real business.³²⁷

In so far as the pure economic necessity of cow protection is concerned, it can be easily secured if the question was considered on that ground alone. In that event all the dry cattle, the cows who give less milk than their keep, and the aged and unfit cattle would be slaughtered without a second thought. This soulless economy has no place in India, although the inhabitants of this land of paradoxes may be, indeed are, guilty of many soulless acts.

Positive Measures

Then, how can the cow be saved without having to kill her off when she ceases to give the economic quantity of milk or when one becomes otherwise an uneconomic burden? The answer to the question can be summed up as follows:

1. By the Hindus performing their duty towards the cow and her progeny. If they did so, our cattle would be the pride of India and the world. The contrary is the case today.

2. By learning the science of cattle-breeding. To-day there is perfect anarchy in this work.

3. By replacing the present cruel method of castration by the humane method practised in the West.

4. By thorough reform of the *pinjrapoles* [institutions for aged cows] of India which are today, as a rule, managed ignorantly and without any plan by men who do not know their work.

5. When these primary things are done, it will be found that the Muslims will, of their own accord, recognize the necessity, if only for the sake of their Hindu brethren, of not slaughtering cattle for beef or otherwise.

The reader will observe that behind the foregoing requirements lies one thing and that is *ahimsa*, otherwise known as universal compassion. If that supreme thing is realized, everything else becomes easy. Where there is *ahimsa*, there is *infinite* patience, inner calm, discrimination, self-sacrifice and true knowledge.³²⁸

82. CO-OPERATIVE CATTLE FARMING

It is quite impossible for an individual farmer to look after the welfare of his cattle in his own home in a proper and scientific manner. Amongst other causes, lack of collective effort has been a principal cause of the deterioration of the cow and hence of cattle in general.

The world today is moving towards the ideal of collective or co-operative effort in every department of life. Much in this line has been and is being accomplished. It has come into our country also, but in such a distorted form that our poor have not been able to reap its benefits. *Pari passu* with the increase in our population, land holdings of the average farmer are daily decreasing. Moreover, what the individual possesses is often fragmentary.

For such farmers to keep cattle in their home is a suicidal policy; and yet this is their condition today. Those who give the first place to economics and pay scant attention to religious, ethical or humanitarian considerations proclaim from the house-tops that the farmer is being devoured by his cattle due to the cost of their feed which is out of all proportion to what they yield. They say it is folly not to slaughter wholesale all useless animals.

What then should be done by humanitarians is the question. The answer obviously is to find a way whereby we may not only save the lives of our cattle, but also see that they do not become a burden. I am sure that co-operative effort can help us in a large measure. The following comparison may be helpful:

(1) Under the collective system, no farmer can keep cattle in his house as he does today. They foul the air, and dirty the surroundings. There is neither intelligence nor humanitarianism in living with animals. Man was not meant to do so. The space taken up by the cattle today would be spared to the farmer and his family if the collective system were adopted.

(2) As the number of cattle increases, life becomes impossible to the farmer in his home. Hence he is obliged to sell the calves and kill the male buffaloes or else turn them out to starve and die. This inhumanity would be averted if the care of the cattle were undertaken on a co-operative basis.

(3) Collective cattle farming would ensure the supply of veterinary treatment to animals when they are ill. No ordinary farmer can afford this on his own.

(4) Similarly, one selected bull can be easily kept for the need of several cows under the collective system. This is impossible otherwise except for charity.

(5) Common grazing ground or land for exercising the animals will be easily available under the co-operative system, whereas today, generally, there is nothing of the kind for individual farmers.

(6) The expense on fodder will be comparatively far less under the collective system.

(7) The sale of milk at good prices will be greatly facilitated and there will be no need or temptation for the farmer to adulterate it as he does as an individual.

(8) It is impossible to carry out tests of the fitness of every head of cattle individually, but this could easily be done for the cattle of a whole village and would thus make it easier to improve the breed.

(9) The foregoing advantages should be sufficient argument in favour of co-operative cattle farming. The strongest argument in its favour is that the individualistic system has been the means of making our own condition as well as that of our cattle pitiable. We can only save ourselves and them by making this essential change.

I firmly believe too that we shall not derive the full benefits of agriculture until we take to co-operative farming. Does it not stand to reason that it is far better for a hundred families in a village to cultivate their lands collectively and divide the income therefrom than to divide the land anyhow into a hundred portions? And what applies to land applies equally to cattle.

It is quite another matter that it may be difficult to convert people to adopt this way of life straightaway. The straight and narrow road is always hard to traverse. Every step in the programme of cow service is strewn with thorny problems. But only by surmounting difficulties can we hope to make the path easier.

My purpose for the time being is to show the great superiority of collective cattle farming over the individual effort. I hold further that the latter is wrong and the former only is right. In reality, even the individual can only safeguard his independence through co-operation. In cattle farming, the individual effort has led to selfishness and inhumanity, whereas the collective effort can abate both the evils, if it does not remove them altogether.³²⁹

83. NATURE CURE

I BELIEVE that man has little need to drug himself. 999 cases out of a thousand can be brought round by means of a well-regulated diet, water and earth treatment and similar household remedies.³³⁰

I hold that where the rules of personal, domestic and public sanitation are strictly observed and due care is taken in the matter of diet and exercise, there should be no occasion for illness or disease. Where there is absolute purity, inner and outer, illness becomes impossible. If the village people could but understand this, they would not need doctors, *hakims* or *vaidyas*. . . .³³¹

Better Life

Nature cure implies an ideal mode of life and that in its turn presupposes ideal living conditions in towns and villages. The name of God is, of course, the hub round which the nature cure system revolves.³³²

Nature cure implies that the treatment should be the cheapest and the simplest possible. The ideal is that such treatment should be carried out in the villages. The villagers should be able to provide the necessary means and

equipment. What cannot be had in the villages should be procured.

Nature cure does mean a change for the better in one's outlook on life itself. It means regulation of one's life in accordance with the laws of health. It is not a matter of taking the free medicine from the hospital or for fees. A man who takes free treatment from the hospital accepts charity. The man who accepts nature cure never begs. Self-help enhances self-respect. He takes steps to cure himself by eliminating poisons from the system and takes precautions against falling ill in the future....³³³

Right Diet

Right diet and balanced diet are necessary. Today our villages are as bankrupt as we are ourselves. To produce enough vegetables, fruits and milk in the villages is an essential part of the nature cure scheme. Time spent on this should not be considered a waste. It is bound to benefit all the villagers and, ultimately, the whole of India.³³⁴

The essence of nature cure is that we learn the principles of hygiene and sanitation and abide by those laws as well as the laws relating to proper nutrition. Thus does every one become his own doctor.

The man who eats to live, who is friends with the five powers—earth, water, ether, sun and air and who is a servant of God, the Creator of all these, ought not to fall ill. If he does, he will remain calm relying on God and die in peace, if need be. If there are any medicinal herbs in the fields of his village, he may make use of them. Crores live and die like this without a murmur. They have not so much as heard of a doctor, much less seen one face to face.³³⁵

Disease

Disease springs from a wilful or ignorant breach of the laws of nature. It follows, therefore, that timely return to those laws should mean restoration. A person who has tried nature beyond endurance, must either suffer the punishment inflicted by nature or in order to avoid it, seek

the assistance of the physician or the surgeon as the case may be. Every submission to merited punishment strengthens the mind of man, every avoidance saps it.³³⁶

My love of nature cure and of indigenous systems does not blind me to the advance that Western medicine has made in spite of the fact that I have stigmatized it as black magic. I have used the harsh term, and I do not withdraw it, because of the fact that it has countenanced vivisection and all the awfulness it means and because it will stop at no practice, however bad it may be, if it prolongs the life of the body and because it ignores the immortal soul which resides in the body. I cling to nature cure in spite of its great limitations and in spite of the lazy pretensions of nature curists.³³⁷

Meant for Villages

My nature cure is designed solely for villagers and villages. Therefore, there is no place in it for the microscope, X-rays and similar things. Nor is there room in nature cure for medicines such as quinine, emetin and penicillin. Personal hygiene and healthy living are of primary importance. And these should suffice.

If everyone could achieve perfection in this art, there could be no disease. And, while obeying all the laws of nature in order to cure illness, if it does come, the sovereign remedy ever lies in *Ramanama*. But this cure through *Ramanama* cannot become universal in the twinkling of an eye. To carry conviction to the patient, the physician has to be a living embodiment of the power of *Ramanama*.³³⁸

Let us become really village-minded. Village children and adults come to us. Let us teach them how to live truly. Doctors aver that 99% of disease springs from insanitation, from eating the wrong food and from under-nourishment. If we can teach this 99% the art of living, we can afford to forget the 1%. . . . They may find a philanthropic doctor . . . to look after them. We need not worry about them.³³⁹

I would like to know what the medical men and scientists are doing for the country. One finds them readily going to foreign lands to learn new modes of treating special diseases. I suggest that they should turn their attention towards the seven lakhs of the villages of India. They would immediately discover that all the qualified men and women are required for village service, not after the manner of the West, but after the manner of the East. They will then adapt themselves to many indigenous systems.

India does not need imported drugs from the West when she has an inexhaustible stock of a variety of drugs grown in the villages themselves. But, more than drugs they have to teach the people the right mode of living.³⁴⁰

84. CORPORATE SANITATION

Civic Conscience

CORPORATE CLEANLINESS can only be ensured if there is a corporate conscience and a corporate insistence on cleanliness in public places. Untouchability has a great deal to answer for the insanitation of our streets and our latrines, whether private or public.

In its inception, untouchability was a rule of sanitation, and still is in all parts of the world outside India. That is to say, an unclean person or thing is untouchable, but immediately his or its uncleanness is shed, he or it is no longer untouchable. Therefore, a person who is to attend to scavenging, whether it is a paid *bhangi* or an unpaid mother, they are unclean until they have washed themselves clean of their unclean work.³⁴¹

Municipalities

No municipality can cope with insanitation and congestion by the simple process of taxation and paid services. This vital reform is possible only by wholesale and voluntary co-operation of the people, both rich and poor.³⁴²

If I were a taxpayer within the jurisdiction of a local board or a municipality, I would refuse to pay a single pie by way of additional taxation and advise others to do likewise unless the money we pay is returned fourfold. Those who enter local boards and municipalities as representatives go there not to seek honour or to indulge in mutual rivalries, but to render a service of love and that does not depend upon money.

Ours is a pauper country. If our municipal councillors are imbued with a real spirit of service, they will convert themselves into unpaid sweepers, *bhangis* and road-makers, and take pride in doing so. They will invite their fellow-councillors, who may not have come on the Congress ticket, to join them and if they have faith in themselves and their mission, their example will not fail to evoke response.

This means that a municipal councillor has to be a whole-timer. He should have no axe of his own to grind. The next step would be to map out the entire adult population within the jurisdiction of the municipality or the local board. All should be asked to make their contribution to municipal activities. A regular register should be maintained. Those who are too poor to make any money contribution but are able-bodied and physically fit can be asked to give their free labour.³⁴³

Offences against Nature

Anyone who fouls the air by spitting about carelessly, throwing refuse and rubbish, or otherwise dirtying the ground, sins against man and nature. Man's body is the temple of God. Anyone who fouls the air that is to enter that temple desecrates it. He takes the name of Rama in vain.³⁴⁴

A sense of national or social sanitation is not a virtue among us. We may take a kind of a bath, but we do not mind dirtying the well or the tank or the river by whose side or in which we perform ablutions. I regard this defect as a great vice which is responsible for the disgraceful state of our villages and the sacred banks of the sacred rivers and for the diseases that spring from insanitation.³⁴⁵

85. COMMUNAL HARMONY

IF NOT during my life-time, I know that after my death both Hindus and Mussalmans will bear witness that I had never ceased to yearn after communal peace.³⁴⁶

My longing is to be able to cement the two [Hindus and Muslims] with my blood, if necessary.³⁴⁷

I have the same love for the Mussalman as for the Hindu. My heart feels for the Mussalman as much as for the Hindu. If I could tear it open, you would discover there are no compartments in it, one reserved for the Hindu, another for the Mussalman and so on.³⁴⁸

Meaning of Unity

[Hindu-Muslim unity] has been my passion from early youth. I count some of the noblest of Muslims as my friends. I have a devout daughter of Islam as more than daughter to me. She lives for that unity and would cheerfully die for it. I had the son of the late Muezzin of the Juma Masjid of Bombay as a staunch inmate of the Ashram.³⁴⁹

[Hindu-Muslim unity] consists in our having a common purpose, a common goal and common sorrows. It is best promoted by co-operating to reach the common goal by sharing of one another's sorrows and by mutual toleration.³⁵⁰

Hindu-Muslim unity means not unity only between Hindus and Mussalmans, but between all those who believe India to be their home, no matter to what faith they belong.³⁵¹

Love is the basis of our friendship as it is of religion. I seek to gain Mussalman friendship by right of love. And if love persists even on the part of one community, unity will become a settled fact in our national life.³⁵²

One Family

The golden way is to be friends with the world and to regard the whole human family like members of one

family. He who distinguishes between one's family and another's miseducates the members of his own and opens the way for discord and irreligion.³⁵³

Communal Riots

The lawlessness [of communalism] is a monster with many faces. It hurts all in the end, including those who are primarily responsible for it.³⁵⁴

If one side ceases to retaliate, the riots will not go on.³⁵⁵

To retaliate against the relatives of the co-religionists of the wrong-doer is a cowardly act.³⁵⁶

There must arise in Islam as well as Hinduism men who, being comparatively pure in character, would work among such men (*goondas*).³⁵⁷

We would convert and control the hooligan elements.³⁵⁸

There is no room for *goondaism* in any religion worth the name, be it Islam, Hinduism or any other.³⁵⁹

Respect for Religions

Each must respect the other's religion, must refrain from even secretly thinking ill of the other.³⁶⁰

No propaganda can be allowed which reviles other religions.³⁶¹

To revile one another's religion, to make reckless statements, to utter untruth, to break the heads of innocent men, to desecrate temples or mosques is a denial of God.³⁶²

The key to the solution of the [communal] tangle lies in every one following the best in his own religion and entertaining equal regard for the other religions and their followers.³⁶³

In trying to explore the hidden treasures of ancient culture, I have come upon this inestimable boon that all that is permanent in ancient Hindu culture is also to be found in the teachings of Jesus, the Buddha, Mahomed and Zoroaster.³⁶⁴

Hinduism has absorbed the best of all the faiths of the world and in that sense is not an exclusive religion. Hence it can have no quarrel with Islam or its followers.³⁶⁵

The sword is no emblem of Islam. But Islam was born in an environment where the sword was, and still remains, the supreme law. . . . The sword is yet too much in evidence among the Mussalmans. It must be sheathed if Islam is to be what it means—peace.³⁶⁶

Islam's distinctive contribution . . . is its unadulterated belief in the oneness of God and a practical application of the truth of the brotherhood of man for those who are nominally within its fold.³⁶⁷

Islam means peace. The peace cannot be confined to the Muslims. It must mean peace for the whole world.³⁶⁸

Proselytization

The days of forcible conversion are gone.³⁶⁹

It is the transference of allegiance from one fold to another and the mutual denying of rival faiths which gives rise to mutual hatred.³⁷⁰

There is nothing in the Koran to warrant the use of force for conversion.³⁷¹

Just as we do not break one another's heads in respect of civil matters, so may we not do even in respect of religious matters.³⁷²

I am convinced that the masses do not want to fight, if the leaders do not. If therefore the leaders agree that mutual rows should be, as in all advanced countries, erased out of our public life as being barbarous and irreligious, I have no doubt that the masses will quietly follow them.³⁷³

Arbitration

It [arbitration] is an age-long method and a civilized method.³⁷⁴

Mutual toleration is a necessity for all time and for all races.³⁷⁵

Honest public opinion should make it impossible for grieved parties to take the law into their own hands and every case [of dispute] must be referred to private arbitration or to law courts. . . .³⁷⁶

Music before Mosques

Where the Hindus have long been deliberately observing the custom to stop music before mosques, they must not break it. But where they have been playing music without interference, the practice should continue. Where trouble is apprehended and facts are disputed, both communities ought to refer the matter to arbitration.³⁷⁷

The Cow

The Hindu's religion consists in saving the cow, but it can never be his religion to save the cow by a resort to force towards a non-Hindu.³⁷⁸

... It would be unwise ... and improper for a Hindu majority to coerce by legislation a Mussalman minority into submission to statutory prohibition of cow slaughter.³⁷⁹

Scripts

My advice about the adoption of the scripts (Hindi and Urdu) by Hindus and Muslims is based on the unitary method.³⁸⁰

The Services

It will be fatal to good government if we introduce there [in Government departments] the communal spirit.³⁸¹

Minorities are entitled to the fullest justice. Efficiency and merit alone should count. . . .³⁸²

Toleration

The unity we desire will last only if we cultivate an yielding and charitable disposition towards one another.³⁸³

Toleration is the only thing that will enable persons belonging to different religions to live as good neighbours and friends.³⁸⁴

Secularism

Nationalism is greater than sectarianism. And in that sense, we are Indians first and Hindus, Mussalman, Parsis and Christians after.³⁸⁵

The State is bound to be wholly secular. . . . All subjects will thus be equal in the eye of the law. But every single individual will be free to pursue a religion without let or hindrance so long as it does not transgress the common law.³⁸⁶

Equal Citizenship

The minorities must be made to realize that they are as much valued citizens of the State they live in as the majority of the State.³⁸⁷

If the Hindu majority treasure their religion and duty, they will be just at all cost. They will overlook the limitations or mistakes of the minority who have no one but the majority to look to for justice.³⁸⁸

You should treat the Muslims as equal citizens. Equality of treatment demands respect for the Urdu script.³⁸⁹

No oppression should be felt by the minorities, however small they may be. There is need for the gentlest handling of all such questions [as language, script].³⁹⁰

My one aim with respect to the Hindu-Muslim question is that the solution will be complete only when the minority, whether in the Indian Union or Pakistan, feels perfectly safe, even if they are in the minority of one.³⁹¹

Hindu and Sikh women should go to the Muslim sisters and establish friendship with them. They should invite them on ceremonial occasions and be invited. Muslim girls and boys should be attracted to common schools, not communal. They should mix in sports.³⁹²

XIII : SWADESHI

86. THE GOSPEL OF THE CHARKHA

Unto the Poor

I THINK of the poor of India every time that I draw a thread on the wheel. The poor of India today have lost faith in God, more so than the middle classes or the rich. For a person suffering from the pangs of hunger, and desiring nothing but to fill his belly, his belly is his God. To him any one who gives him his bread is his Master. Through him he may even see God. To give alms to such persons, who are sound in all their limbs, is to debase oneself and them. What they need is some kind of occupation, and the occupation that will give employment to millions can only be hand-spinning.

... I have described my spinning as a penance or sacrament. And, since I believe that where there is pure and active love for the poor there is God also, I see God in every thread that I draw on the spinning-wheel.¹

... The spinning-wheel enables us to identify ourselves with the crores. The millionaires imagine that money can bring them anything in the world. But it is not so. At any moment death might come and snuff them out. . . . Losing one's life . . . is not the same thing as shedding 'self'. One has to learn to efface self or the ego voluntarily and as a sacrifice in order to find God. The spinning-wheel rules out exclusiveness. It stands for all including the poorest. It, therefore, requires us to be humble and to cast away pride completely.²

Revival of the cottage industry, and not cottage industries, will remove the growing poverty. When once we have revived the one industry, all the other industries will follow. . . . I would make the spinning-wheel the foundation

on which to build a sound village life. I would make the wheel the centre round which all other activities will revolve.³

Message of the Charkha

I . . . claim for the Charkha the honour of being able to solve the problem of economic distress in a most natural, simple, inexpensive and businesslike manner. . . . It is the symbol of the nation's prosperity and, therefore, freedom. It is a symbol not of commercial war but of commercial peace.⁴

The message of the spinning-wheel is much wider than its circumference. Its message is one of simplicity, service of mankind, living so as not to hurt others, creating an indissoluble bond between the rich and the poor, capital and labour, the prince and the peasant. That larger message is naturally for all.⁵

The message of the spinning-wheel is, really, to replace the spirit of exploitation by the spirit of service. The dominant note in the West is the note of exploitation. I have no desire that our country should copy that spirit or that note.⁶

I do feel that it has a message for the U.S.A. and the whole world. But it cannot be until India has demonstrated to the world that it has made the spinning-wheel its own, which it has not done today. The fault is not of the wheel. I have not the slightest doubt that the saving of India and of the world lies in the wheel. If India becomes the slave of the machine, then, I say, heaven save the world.⁷

Return to Simplicity

If I preach against the modern artificial life of sensual enjoyment, and ask men and women to go back to the simple life epitomized in the Charkha, I do so because I know that, without an intelligent return to simplicity, there is no escape from our descent to a state lower than brutality.⁸

I believe that no other path but that of non-violence will suit India. The symbol of that *dharma* for India is the spinning-wheel as it alone is the friend of the distressed and the giver of plenty for the poor. The law of love knows

no bounds of space or time. My Swaraj, therefore, takes note of Bhangis, Dheds, Dublas and the weakest of the weak, and except the spinning-wheel I know no other thing which befriends all these.⁹

Wheel of Life

Take to spinning [to find peace of mind]. The music of the wheel will be as balm to your soul. I believe that the yarn we spin is capable of mending the broken warp and woof of our life. The Charkha is the symbol of non-violence on which all life, if it is to be real life, must be based.¹⁰

Some will recall through the wheel the name of that Prince of Peace, Ashoka, the founder of an empire, who ultimately gave up the pomp and circumstance of power to become the undisputed Emperor of the hearts of men and became the representative of all the then known faiths. We would call it a legitimate interpretation of the wheel to seek in it the Wheel of Law ascribed to that living store of mercy and love.

The spinning-wheel thus interpreted adds to its importance in the life of billions of mankind. To liken it to and to derive it from the Ashoka disc is to recognize in the insignificant-looking Charkha the necessity of obeying the ever-moving Wheel of the Divine Law of Love.¹¹

. . . Spinning has become a part and parcel of the Ashram prayer. The conception of spinning as sacrifice has been linked with the idea of God, the reason being that we believe that in the Charkha and what it stands for lies the only hope of salvation of the poor.¹²

It is my claim that the universalization of hand-spinning with a full knowledge of all that it stands for alone can bring that [conquest of inertia] in a sub-continent so vast and varied as India. I have compared spinning to the central sun and the other village crafts to the various constellations in the solar system. The former gives light and warmth to the latter and sustains them. Without it they would not be able to exist.¹³

Duty of Spinning

Just as every one of us must eat and drink and clothe himself, even so everyone of us must spin himself.¹⁴

I do not know whether I am a Karmayogi or any other Yogi. I know that I cannot live without work. I crave to die with my hand at the spinning-wheel. If one has to establish communion with God through some means, why not through the spinning wheel? Him who worships Me, says the Lord in the Gita, I guide along the right path and see to his needs.¹⁵

If every woman in India spins, then a silent revolution will certainly be created, of which a Jawaharlal [Nehru] can make full use. Unless steam generated is put to proper use, the engine will not run and the person generating the steam may himself be scalded by it even unto death.¹⁶

A scientific study of the spinning-wheel will lead on to Sociology. The spinning-wheel will not become a power for the liberation of India in our hands unless we have made a deep study of the various sciences related to it. It will then not only make India free, but point the way to the whole world.¹⁷

'Livery of Freedom'

... While Khadi is good for the poor as an honourable occupation for earning bread, it has an additional and far greater value as an instrument of winning Swaraj through non-violent means.¹⁸

In 1908, in South Africa, I conceived the idea that, if poverty-stricken India were to be freed from the alien yoke, India must learn to look upon the spinning-wheel and hand-spun yarn as the symbol, not of slavery, but of freedom. It should also mean butter to bread.¹⁹

Khadi to me is the symbol of unity of Indian humanity, of its economic freedom and equality and, therefore, ultimately, in the poetic expression of Jawaharlal Nehru, "the livery of India's freedom".

Moreover, Khadi mentality means decentralization of the production and distribution of the necessities of life.

Therefore, the formula so far evolved is, every village to produce all its necessities and a certain percentage in addition for the requirements of the cities.

Heavy industries will needs be centralized and nationalized. But they will occupy the least part of the vast national activity which will mainly be in the villages. . . .

Since the wanton destruction of this central village industry and the allied handicrafts, intelligence and brightness have fled from the villages, leaving them inane, lustreless, and reduced almost to the state of their ill-kept cattle.²⁰

Economic Regeneration

I feel convinced that the revival of hand-spinning and hand-weaving will make the largest contribution to the economic and the moral regeneration of India. The millions must have a simple industry to supplement agriculture. Spinning was the cottage industry years ago, and if the millions are to be saved from starvation, they must be enabled to introduce spinning in their homes, and every village must repossess its own weaver.²¹

It bears not a message of ill-will towards the nations of the earth but of good-will and self-help. It will not need the protection of a navy threatening a world's peace and exploiting its resources, but it needs the religious determination of millions to spin their yarn in their own homes as today they cook their food in their own homes.

I may deserve the curses of posterity for many mistakes of omission and commission, but I am confident of earning its blessings for suggesting a revival of the Charkha. I stake my all on it. For every revolution of the wheel spins peace, good-will and love. And with all that, inasmuch as the loss of it brought about India's slavery, its voluntary revival with all its implications must mean India's freedom.²²

Hope of Rural Masses

I have often said that, if the seven lakhs of the villages of India were to be kept alive, and if peace that is at

the root of all civilization is to be achieved, we have to make the spinning-wheel the centre of all handicrafts.²³

The spinning-wheel represents to me the hope of the masses. The masses lost their freedom, such as it was, with the loss of the Charkha. The Charkha supplemented the agriculture of the villagers and gave it dignity. It was the friend and solace of the widow. It kept the villagers from idleness. For the Charkha included all the anterior and posterior industries—ginning, carding, warping, sizing, dyeing and weaving. These in their turn kept the village carpenter and the blacksmith busy.

The Charkha enabled the seven hundred thousand villages to become self-contained. With the exit of the Charkha went the other village industries, such as the oil press. Nothing took the place of these industries. Therefore, the villages were drained of their varied occupations and their creative talent and what little wealth these brought them. . . . Hence, if the villages are to come into their own, the most natural thing that suggests itself is the revival of the Charkha and all it means.²⁴

I have no doubt in my mind that the wheel can serve as the instrument of earning one's livelihood and, at the same time, enable the worker to render useful service to his neighbours. . . . In order to ply the wheel intelligently, he should know all the processes that precede and succeed spinning.²⁵

The conviction dawned upon me even before I came to India that the revival of hand-spinning alone could restore India to its pristine glory. I have since compared the spinning-wheel to the central sun round which the solar system of our village economy revolves. It provides the golden bridge between the rich and the poor.²⁶

The Charkha is not like either the small or large machines of the West. There crores of watches are produced in a few special places. They are sold all over the world. The same tale applies to the sewing machine. These things

are symbols of one civilization. The Charkha represents the opposite.

We do not want to universalize the Charkha through mass production in one place. Our ideal is to make the Charkha and all its accessories in the locality where the spinners live. Therein lies the value of the spinning-wheel. Anything that goes wrong with it should be put right on the spot and the spinners should be taught how to do so.²⁷

Mill Industry

Our Mills cannot today spin enough for our wants, and if they did, they will not keep down prices unless they were compelled. They are frankly money-makers and will not, therefore, regulate prices according to the needs of the nation. Hand-spinning is therefore designed to put millions of rupees in the hands of the poor villagers. Every agricultural country requires a supplementary industry to enable the peasants to utilize the spare hours. Such industry for India has always been spinning. Is it such a visionary ideal—an attempt to revive an ancient occupation whose destruction has brought on slavery, pauperism and disappearance of the inimitable artistic talent which was once all expressed in the wonderful fabric of India which was the envy of the world?²⁸

Do I seek to destroy the mill-industry, I have often been asked. If I did, I should not have pressed for the abolition of the excise duty. I want the mill-industry to prosper—only I do not want it to prosper at the expense of the country. On the contrary, if the interests of the country demand that the industry should go, I should let it go without the slightest compunction.²⁹

In my opinion, the mill-hands are as much the proprietors of their mills as the share-holders, and when the mill-owners realize that the mill-hands are as much mill-owners as they, there will be no quarrel between them.³⁰

87. MEANING OF SWADESHI

Spirit of Swadeshi

SWADESHI IS that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. Thus, as for religion, in order to satisfy the requirements of the definition, I must restrict myself to my ancestral religion. That is, the use of my immediate religious surrounding. If I find it defective, I should serve it by purging it of its defects.

In the domain of politics, I should make use of the indigenous institutions and serve them by curing them of their proved defects. In that of economics, I should use only things that are produced by my immediate neighbours and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting. It is suggested that such Swadeshi, if reduced to practice, will lead to the millennium. . . .

Religion

. . . Hinduism has become a conservative religion and, therefore, a mighty force because of the Swadeshi spirit underlying it. It is the most tolerant because it is non-proselytising and it is as capable of expansion today as it has been found to be in the past. It has succeeded not in driving out, as I think it has been erroneously held, but in absorbing Buddhism. By reason of the Swadeshi spirit, a Hindu refuses to change his religion, not necessarily because he considers it to be the best, but because he knows that he can complement it by introducing reforms. And what I have said about Hinduism is, I suppose, true of the other great faiths of the world, only it is held that it is specially so in the case of Hinduism.

Education

We have laboured under a terrible handicap owing to an almost fatal departure from the Swadeshi spirit. We,

the educated classes, have received our education through a foreign tongue. We have, therefore, not reacted upon the masses. We want to represent the masses, but we fail. They recognize us not much more than they recognize the English officers. Their hearts are an open book to neither. Their aspirations are not ours. Hence there is a break. And you witness not, in reality, failure to organize but want of correspondence between the representatives and the represented.

If during the last fifty years we had been educated through the vernaculars, our elders and our servants and our neighbours would have partaken of our knowledge; the discoveries of a Bose or a Ray would have been household treasures as are the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharat*. As it is, so far as the masses are concerned, those great discoveries might as well have been made by foreigners. Had instruction in all the branches of learning been given through the vernaculars, I make bold to say that they would have been enriched wonderfully. . . .

Economic Life

Much of the deep poverty of the masses is due to the ruinous departure from Swadeshi in the economic and industrial life. If not an article of commerce had been brought from outside India, she would be today a land flowing with milk and honey. But that was not to be. We were greedy and so was England. The connexion between England and India was based clearly upon an error. . . .

If we follow the Swadeshi doctrine, it would be your duty and mine to find out neighbours who can supply our wants and to teach them to supply them where they do not know how to proceed, assuming that there are neighbours who are in want of healthy occupation. Then every village of India will almost be a self-supporting and self-contained unit, exchanging only such necessary commodities with other villages as are not locally producible.

This may all sound nonsensical. Well, India is a country of nonsense. It is nonsensical to parch one's throat with thirst when a kindly Mahomedan is ready to offer

pure water to drink. And yet thousands of Hindus would rather die of thirst than drink water from a Mahomedan household. These nonsensical men can also, once they are convinced that their religion demands that they should wear garments manufactured in India only and eat food only grown in India, decline to wear any other clothing or eat any other food. . . .

Religious Discipline

It has often been urged that India cannot adopt Swadeshi, in the economic life at any rate. Those who advance this objection do not look upon Swadeshi as a rule of life. With them it is a mere patriotic effort—not to be made if it involved any self-denial. Swadeshi, as defined here, is a religious discipline to be undergone in utter disregard of the physical discomfort it may cause to individuals. Under its spell the deprivation of a pin or a needle, because these are not manufactured in India, need cause no terror. A Swadeshist will learn to do without hundreds of things which today he considers necessary. . . .

I would urge that Swadeshi is the only doctrine consistent with the law of humility and love. It is arrogance to think of launching out to serve the whole of India when I am hardly able to serve even my own family. It were better to concentrate my effort upon the family and consider that through them I was serving the whole nation and, if you will, the whole of humanity. This is humility and it is love.

The motive will determine the quality of the act. I may serve my family regardless of the sufferings I may cause to others. As, for instance, I may accept an employment which enables me to extort money from people. I enrich myself thereby and then satisfy many unlawful demands of the family. Here I am neither serving the family nor the State.

Or I may recognize that God has given me hands and feet only to work with for my sustenance and for that of those who may be dependent upon me. I would then at once simplify my life and that of those whom I can directly

reach. In this instance, I would have served the family without causing injury to anyone else. Supposing that every one followed this mode of life, we should have at once an ideal state. All will not reach that state at the same time. But those of us who, realizing its truth, enforce it in practice, will clearly anticipate and accelerate the coming of that happy day.³¹

Service of Neighbours

My definition of Swadeshi is well known. I must not serve my distant neighbour at the expense of the nearest. It is never vindictive or punitive. It is in no sense narrow, for I buy from every part of the world what is needed for my growth. I refuse to buy from anybody anything, however nice or beautiful, if it interferes with my growth or injures those whom Nature has made my first care.

I buy useful healthy literature from every part of the world. I buy surgical instruments from England, pins and pencils from Austria and watches from Switzerland. But I will not buy an inch of the finest cotton fabric from England or Japan or any other part of the world because it has injured and increasingly injures the millions of the inhabitants of India.

I hold it to be sinful for me to refuse to buy the cloth spun and woven by the needy millions of India's paupers and to buy foreign cloth although it may be superior in quality to the Indian hand-spun. My Swadeshi, therefore, chiefly centres round the hand-spun Khaddar and extends to everything that can be and is produced in India.³²

[The votary of Swadeshi will,] as a first duty, dedicate himself to the service of his immediate neighbours. This involves exclusion or even sacrifice of the interests of the rest, but the exclusion or the sacrifice would be only in appearance. Pure service of our neighbours can never, from its very nature, result in disservice to those who are far away, but rather the contrary.

'As with the individual, so with the universe' is an un-failing principle which we would do well to lay to heart.

On the other hand, a man who allows himself to be lured by 'the distant scene', and runs to the ends of the earth for service, is not only foiled in his ambition, but also fails in his duty towards his neighbours. . . .³³

I believe in the truth implicitly that a man can serve his neighbours and humanity at the same time, the condition being that the service of the neighbours is in no way selfish or exclusive, i.e., does not in any way involve the exploitation of any other human being. The neighbours will then understand the spirit in which such service is given. They will also know that they will be expected to give their services to their neighbours. Thus considered, it will spread like the proverbial snow-ball gathering strength in geometrical progression, encircling the whole earth. It follows that Swadeshi is that spirit which dictates man to serve his next-door neighbour to the exclusion of any other. The condition that I have already mentioned is that the neighbour, thus served, has, in his turn, to serve his own neighbour. In this sense, Swadeshi is never exclusive. It recognizes the scientific limitation of human capacity for service.³⁴

No Chauvinism

Under this plan of life, in seeming to serve India to the exclusion of every other country, I do not harm any other country. My patriotism is both exclusive and inclusive. It is exclusive in the sense that, in all humility, I confine my attention to the land of my birth, but is inclusive in the sense that my service is not of a competitive or antagonistic nature. *Sic utere tuo ut alienum non laedas* is not merely a legal maxim, but it is a grand doctrine of life. It is the key to a proper practice of *ahimsa* or love.³⁵

I have never considered the exclusion of everything foreign under every conceivable circumstance as a part of Swadeshi. The broad definition of Swadeshi is the use of all home-made things to the exclusion of foreign things, in so far as such use is necessary for the protection of home-industry, more especially those industries without which India will become pauperized. In my opinion, therefore, Swadeshi which excludes the use of everything foreign, no matter how beneficial it may be, and irrespective of the

fact that it impoverishes nobody, is a narrow interpretation of Swadeshi.³⁶

Even Swadeshi, like any other good thing, can be ridden to death if it is made a fetish. That is a danger that must be guarded against. To reject foreign manufactures, merely because they are foreign and to go on wasting national time and money in the promotion in one's country of manufactures for which it is not suited would be criminal folly and a negation of the Swadeshi spirit.

A true votary of Swadeshi will never harbour ill-will towards the foreigner; he will not be actuated by antagonism towards anybody on earth. Swadeshism is not a cult of hatred. It is a doctrine of selfless service that has its roots in the purest *ahimsa*, i. e., love.³⁷

XIV: BROTHERHOOD

88. THE GOSPEL OF LOVE

Cohesive Power

THE FORCE of love is the same as the force of the soul or truth. We have evidence of its working at every step. The universe would disappear without the existence of that force. . . . Thousands, indeed tens of thousands, depend for their existence on a very active working of this force. Little quarrels of millions of families in their daily lives disappear before the exercise of this force. Hundreds of nations live in peace. History does not and cannot take note of this fact. History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force of love or of the soul. Two brothers quarrel; one of them repents and reawakens the love that was lying dormant in him; the two again begin to live in peace; nobody takes note of this. But if the two brothers, through the intervention of solicitors or some other reason, take up arms or go to law—which is another form of the exhibition of brute force—their doings would be immediately noticed in the Press, they would be the talk of their neighbours and would probably go down to history. And what is true of families and communities is true of nations. There is no reason to believe that there is one law for families and another for nations. History, then, is a record of an interruption of the course of nature. Soul-force, being natural, is not noted in history.¹

Scientists tell us that, without the presence of the cohesive force amongst the atoms that comprise this globe of ours, it would crumble to pieces and we would cease to exist; and even as there is cohesive force in blind matter, so must there be in all things animate, and the name for that cohesive force among animate beings is Love. We notice it between father and son, between brother and

sister, friend and friend. But we have to learn to use that force among all that lives, and in the use of it consists our knowledge of God. Where there is love there is life; hatred leads to destruction.²

I believe that the sum total of the energy of mankind is not to bring us down but to lift us up, and that is the result of the definite, if unconscious, working of the law of love. The fact that mankind persists shows that the cohesive force is greater than the disruptive force, centripetal force greater than centrifugal.³

Law of Our Being

Brute force has been the ruling factor in the world for thousands of years, and mankind has been reaping its bitter harvest all along, as he who runs may read. There is little hope of anything good coming out of it in the future. If light can come out of darkness, then alone can love emerge from hatred.⁴

I have found that life persists in the midst of destruction and, therefore, there must be a higher law than that of destruction. Only under that law would a well-ordered society be intelligible and life worth living. And if that is the law of life, we have to work it out in daily life. Wherever there are jars, wherever you are confronted with an opponent, conquer him with love. In this crude manner, I have worked it out in my life. That does not mean that all my difficulties are solved. Only, I have found that this law of love has answered as the law of destruction has never done.⁵

If love or non-violence be not the law of our being, . . . there is no escape from a periodical recrudescence of war, each succeeding one outdoing the preceding one in ferocity. . . .

All the teachers that ever lived have preached that law with more or less vigour. If Love was not the law of life, life would not have persisted in the midst of death. Life is a perpetual triumph over the grave. If there is a fundamental distinction between man and beast, it is the former's progressive recognition of the law and its application in practice to his own personal life. All the saints of the

M. G.-27

world, ancient and modern, were each according to his light and capacity a living illustration of that supreme Law of our Being. That the brute in us seems so often to gain an easy triumph is true enough. That, however, does not disprove the law. It shows the difficulty of practice. How should it be otherwise with a law which is as high as truth itself? When the practice of the law becomes universal, God will reign on earth as He does in Heaven. I need not be reminded that earth and Heaven are in us. We know the earth, we are strangers to the Heaven within us. If it is allowed that for some the practice of love is possible, it is arrogance not to allow even the possibility of its practice in all the others. Not very remote ancestors of ours indulged in cannibalism and many other practices which we would today call loathsome. No doubt in those days too there were Dick Sheppards who must have been laughed at and possibly pilloried for preaching the (to them) strange doctrine of refusing to eat fellow-men.⁶

History is a record of perpetual wars, but we are trying to make new history, and I say this as I represent the national mind so far as non-violence is concerned. I have reasoned out the doctrine of the sword, I have worked out its possibilities and come to the conclusion that man's destiny is to replace the law of the jungle with the law of conscious love.⁷

Where love is, there God is also.⁸

Love never claims, it ever gives. Love ever suffers, never resents, never revenges itself.⁹

Rule of Service

The safest rule of conduct is to claim kinship when we want to do service, and not to insist on kinship when we want to assert a right. Indeed, I have applied this rule of life, which I call the golden rule of conduct, even for inter-provincial relations in India. . . . I know no other method of preserving sweet relations in human affairs and I am fortified in my conclusion by an experience extending over a long period of years that, wherever there is an interruption

in the observance of this golden rule, there have been bickerings, quarrels and even breaking of heads. . . .¹⁰

Equality of Treatment

[My central aim] is equal treatment for the whole of humanity and that equal treatment means equality of service.¹¹

For, though they [men] are not all of the same age, the same height, the same skin, and the same intellect, these inequalities are temporary and superficial, the soul that is hidden beneath this earthly crust is one and the same for all men and women belonging to all climes. . . . There is a real and substantial unity in all the variety that we see around us. The word 'inequality' has a bad odour about it, and it has led to arrogance and inhumanities, both in the East and the West. What is true about men is also true about nations, which are but groups of men. The false and rigid doctrine of inequality has led to the insolent exploitation of the nations of Asia and Africa. Who knows that the present ability of the West to prey upon the East is a sign of Western superiority and Eastern inferiority?¹²

The forms are many, but the informing spirit is one. How can there be room for distinctions of high and low where there is this all-embracing fundamental unity underlying the outward diversity? For that is a fact meeting you at every step in daily life. The final goal of all religions is to realize this essential oneness.¹³

I believe in the sovereign rule of the law of love which makes no distinctions.¹⁴

I have known no distinction between relatives and strangers, countrymen and foreigners, white and coloured, Hindus and Indians of other faiths, whether Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians or Jews. I may say that my heart has been incapable of making any such distinctions. I cannot claim this as a special virtue, as it is in my very nature, rather than a result of any effort on my part, whereas in the case of *ahimsa* (non-violence), *brahmacharya* (celibacy), *aparigraha* (non-possession) and other cardinal virtues, I am fully conscious of a continuous striving for their cultivation.¹⁵

We must widen the circle of our love till it embraces the whole village; the village in its turn must take into its fold the district, the district the province, and so on till the scope of our love becomes co-terminous with the world.¹⁶

We are living in times when values are undergoing quick changes. We are not satisfied with slow results. We are not satisfied with the welfare merely of our own caste-fellows, not even of our own country. We feel or want to feel for the whole of humanity. All this is a tremendous gain in humanity's search towards its goal.¹⁷

My appeal to you . . . is to cleanse your hearts and to have charity. Make your hearts as broad as the ocean. . . . Do not judge others lest you be judged. There is that Supreme Judge who can hang you, but He leaves you alive. There are so many enemies within you and around you, but He protects and looks upon you with a kindly eye.¹⁸

Mutual Toleration

The golden rule of conduct . . . is mutual toleration, seeing that we will never all think alike and we shall always see Truth in fragment and from different angles of vision. Conscience is not the same thing for all. Whilst, therefore, it is a good guide for individual conduct, imposition of that conduct upon all will be an insufferable interference with everybody's freedom of conscience. . . . Even amongst the most conscientious persons, there will be room enough for honest differences of opinion. The only possible rule of conduct in any civilized society is, therefore, mutual toleration.¹⁹

Forgiveness is a quality of the soul, and therefore, a positive quality. It is not negative. 'Conquer anger,' says Lord Buddha, 'by non-anger.' But what is that 'non-anger'? It is a positive quality and means the supreme virtue of charity or love. You must be roused to this supreme virtue which must express itself in your going to the angry man, ascertaining from him the cause of his anger, making amends if you have given any cause for offence and then bringing home to him the error of his way and convincing him

that it is wrong to be provoked. This consciousness of the quality of the soul, and deliberate exercise of it, elevate not only the man but the surrounding atmosphere. Of course, only he who has that love will exercise it. This love can certainly be cultivated by incessant striving.²⁰

What is true of individuals is true of nations. One cannot forgive too much. The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.²¹

Trust

I refuse to suspect human nature. It will, is bound to, respond to any noble and friendly action.²²

There is no distrust of men and mankind in me. They will answer before God, so why should I worry? But where my own mission is concerned, my thought is active, and I try to wish everyone well in spite of doubts and mistrust. I will suffer the agony if that is to be my lot. But I may not unnerve myself while I can struggle against evil.²³

Mutual trust and mutual love are no trust and no love. The real love is to love them that hate you, to love your neighbour even though you distrust him. I have sound reasons for distrusting the English official world. If my love is sincere, I must love the Englishman in spite of my distrust. Of what avail is my love, if it be only so long as I trust my friend? Even thieves do that. They become enemies immediately the trust is gone.²⁴

From Mouths of Babes

Believe me, from my experience of hundreds, I was going to say thousands, of children, I know that they have perhaps a finer sense of honour than you and I have. The greatest lessons in life, if we would but stoop and humble ourselves, we would learn not from grown-up learned men, but from the so-called ignorant children. Jesus never uttered a loftier or a grander truth than when he said that wisdom cometh out of the mouths of babes. I believe it. I have noticed it in my own experience that, if we would approach babes in humility and in innocence, we would learn wisdom from them.

World Peace

I have learned this one lesson—that what is impossible with man is child's play with God and if we have faith in that Divinity which presides on the destiny of the meanest of His creation, I have no doubt that all things are possible; and, in that final hope, I live and pass my time and endeavour to obey His will.

... If we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with children; and if they will grow up in their natural innocence, we won't have to struggle, we won't have to pass fruitless, idle resolutions, but we shall go from love to love and peace to peace, until at last all the corners of the world are covered with that peace and love for which, consciously or unconsciously, the whole world is hungering.²⁵

Soul-Force

Every moment of my life I realize that God is putting me on my trial.²⁶

If I could popularize the use of soul-force, which is but another name for love-force, in place of brute-force, I know I could present you with an India that could defy the whole world to do its worst. In season and out of season, therefore, I shall discipline myself to express in my life this eternal law of suffering, and present it for acceptance to those who care, and if I take part in any other activity, the motive is to show the matchless superiority of that law.²⁷

Having flung aside the sword, there is nothing except the cup of love which I can offer to those who oppose me. It is by offering that cup that I expect to draw them close to me. I cannot think of permanent enmity between man and man, and believing as I do in the theory of rebirth, I live in the hope that, if not in this birth, in some other birth, I shall be able to hug all humanity in friendly embrace.²⁸

Mission of Love

It is perfectly true, I must admit it in all humility, that however indifferently it may be, I endeavour to represent love in every fibre of my being. I am impatient to realize the presence of my Maker, who to me embodies Truth, and, in the early part of my career, I discovered that, if I was to realize Truth, I must obey, even at the cost of my life, the law of Love. And having been blessed with children, I discovered that the law of Love could be best understood and learned through little children. Were it not for us, their ignorant poor parents, our children would be perfectly innocent. I believe implicitly that the child is not born mischievous in the bad sense of the term. If parents would behave themselves whilst the child is growing, before it is born and after, it is a well-known fact that the child would instinctively obey the law of Truth and the law of Love. And when I understood this lesson in the early part of my life, I began a gradual but distinct change in life.

I do not propose to describe to you the several phases through which this stormy life of mine has passed; but I can only, in truth and in perfect humility, bear witness to the fact that to the extent that I have represented Love in my life, in thought, word, and deed, I have realized the 'Peace that passeth understanding'. I have baffled many of my friends when they have noticed in me peace that they have envied, and they have asked me for the cause of that priceless possession. I have not been able to explain the cause save by saying that, if my friends found that peace in me, it was due to an attempt to obey this, the greatest law of our being.²⁹

I am trying every moment of my life to be guided by *ahimsa*, by love. I am essentially a lover of peace. I do not want to create dissensions. And I assure those who oppose me that I shall not do a single thing which I know may be contrary to truth and love.³⁰

I have no weapon but love to wield authority over anyone.³¹

My goal is friendship with the world and I can combine the greatest love with the greatest opposition to wrong.³²

I have that implicit faith in my mission that, if it succeeds—as it will succeed, it is bound to succeed—history will record it as a movement designed to knit all people in the world together, not as hostile to one another but as parts of one whole.³³

89. ALL LIFE IS ONE

Kinship with All

MY ETHICS not only permit me to claim but require me to own kinship with not merely the ape but the horse and the sheep, the lion and the leopard, the snake and the scorpion. Not so need these kinsfolk regard themselves.

The hard ethics which rule my life, and I hold ought to rule that of every man and woman, imposes this unilateral obligation upon us. And it is so imposed because man alone is made in the image of God. That some of us do not recognize that status of ours makes no difference, except that then we do not get the benefit of the status, even as a lion brought up in the company of sheep may not know his own status and, therefore, does not receive its benefits; but it belongs to him nevertheless, and, the moment he realizes it, he begins to exercise his dominion over the sheep. But no sheep masquerading as a lion can ever attain the leonine status.

And, to prove the proposition that man is made in the image of God, it is surely unnecessary to show that all men admittedly exhibit that image in their own persons. It is enough to show that one man at least has done so. And, will it be denied that the great religious teachers of mankind have exhibited the image of God in their own persons?³⁴

I believe myself to be saturated with *ahimsa*—non-violence. *Ahimsa* and Truth are as my two lungs. I cannot live without them. But I see every moment, with more and more clearness, the immense power of *ahimsa* and the littleness of man.

Imperfect Non-violence

Even the forest-dweller cannot be entirely free from violence, in spite of his limitless compassion. With every breath he commits a certain amount of violence. The body itself is a house of slaughter, and, therefore, *moksha* and Eternal Bliss consist in perfect deliverance from the body, and, therefore, all pleasure, save the joy of *moksha*, is evanescent, imperfect. That being the case, we have to drink, in daily life, many a bitter draught of violence.³⁵

All life in the flesh exists by some *himsa*. Hence, the highest religion has been defined by a negative word: *ahimsa*. The world is bound in a chain of destruction. In other words, *himsa* is an inherent necessity for life in the body. That is why a votary of *ahimsa* always prays for ultimate deliverance from the bondage of flesh.³⁶

I am painfully aware of the fact that my desire to continue life in the body involves me in constant *himsa*. That is why I am becoming growingly indifferent to this physical body of mine. For instance, I know that, in the act of respiration, I destroy innumerable invisible germs floating in the air. But I do not stop breathing. The consumption of vegetables involves *himsa*, but I find that I cannot give them up.

Again, there is *himsa* in the use of antiseptics, yet I cannot bring myself to discard the use of disinfectants like kerosene, etc., to rid myself of the mosquito pest and the like. I suffer snakes to be killed in the Ashram when it is impossible to catch them and put them out of harm's way. I even tolerate the use of the stick to drive the bullocks in the Ashram.

Thus, there is no end to *himsa* which I directly and indirectly commit. . . . If, as a result of this humble confession of mine, friends choose to give me up as lost, I would be

sorry, but nothing will induce me to try to conceal my imperfections in the practice of *ahimsa*. All I claim for myself is that I am ceaselessly trying to understand the implications of great ideals like *ahimsa* and to practise them in thought, word and deed, and that not without a certain measure of success as I think. But I know that I have a long distance yet to cover in this direction.³⁷

Vivisection

I am not opposed to the progress of science as such. On the contrary, the scientific spirit of the West commands my admiration and, if that admiration is qualified, it is because the scientist of the West takes no note of God's lower creation. I abhor vivisection with my whole soul. I detest the unpardonable slaughter of innocent life in the name of science and humanity so-called, and all the scientific discoveries stained with innocent blood I count as of no consequence.

If the circulation of blood theory could not have been discovered without vivisection, the human kind could well have done without it. And I see the day clearly dawning when the honest scientist of the West will put limitations upon the present methods of pursuing knowledge.

Lower Order

Future measurements will take note not merely of the human family but of all that lives, and even as we are slowly but surely discovering that it is an error to suppose that Hindus can thrive upon the degradation of a fifth of themselves or that peoples of the West can rise or live upon the exploitation and degradation of the Eastern and African nations, so shall we realize in the fulness of time that our dominion over the lower order of creation is not for their slaughter, but for their benefit equally with ours. For I am as certain that they are endowed with a soul as that I am.³⁸

Further march of civilization seems to employ increasing domination of man over beast, together with a growingly humane method of using them. There are three

schools of humanitarians. One believes in replacing animal power by the use of any other. Another believes in treating animals as fellow-beings and making such use of these as a brotherly spirit will permit. The third will not make use of lower animals for man's selfish purpose, but will employ instead one's own power and that of fellow-beings to the extent that the latter give intelligent and willing use. I belong to the third school.³⁹

"Mercy-Killing"

I cannot for a moment bear to see a dog, or for that matter any other living being, helplessly suffering the torture of a slow death. I do not kill a human being thus circumstanced because I have more hopeful remedies. I should kill a dog similarly situated, because in its case I am without a remedy. Should my child be attacked by rabies and there was no hopeful remedy to relieve his agony, I should consider it my duty to take his life.

Fatalism has its limits. We leave things to fate after exhausting all the remedies. One of the remedies and the final one to relieve the agony of a tortured child is to take his life.⁴⁰

I would not kill a human being for protecting a cow, as I will not kill a cow for saving a human life, be it ever so precious.⁴¹

To my mind the life of a lamb is no less precious than that of a human being. I should be unwilling to take the life of a lamb for the sake of the human body. I hold that the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection by man from the cruelty of man.⁴²

Problem of Venomous Beasts

I do not want to live at the cost of the life even of a snake. I should let him bite me to death rather than kill him. But it is likely that, if God puts me to that cruel test and permits a snake to assault me, I may not have the courage to die, but that the beast in me may assert itself and I may seek to kill the snake in defending this perishable body.

I admit that my belief has not become so incarnate in me as to warrant my stating emphatically that I have shed all fear of snakes so as to befriend them as I would like to be able to. It is my implicit belief that snakes, tigers, etc., are God's answer to the poisonous, wicked, evil thoughts we harbour. . . .

I believe that all life is one. Thoughts take definite forms. Tigers and snakes have kinship with us. They are a warning to us to avoid harbouring evil, wicked, lustful thoughts. If I want to rid the earth of venomous beasts and reptiles, I must rid myself of all venomous thoughts. I shall not do so if, in my impatient ignorance and in my desire to prolong the existence of the body, I seek to kill the so-called venomous beasts and reptiles. If in not seeking to defend myself against such noxious animals I die, I should rise again a better and fuller man. With that faith in me, how should I seek to kill a fellow-being in a snake?⁴³

. . . We are living in the midst of death, trying to grope our way to Truth. Perhaps it is as well that we are beset with danger at every point in our life, for, in spite of our knowledge of the danger and of our precarious existence, our indifference to the Source of all life is excelled only by our amazing arrogance.

. . . My intellect rebels against the destruction of any life in any shape whatsoever. But my heart is not strong enough to befriend these creatures which, experience has shown, are destructive. The language of convincing confidence, which comes from actual experience, fails me, and it will continue to do so, so long as I am cowardly enough to fear snakes, tigers and the like.⁴⁴

I verily believe that man's habit of killing man on the slightest pretext has darkened his reason and he gives himself liberties with other life which he would shudder to take if he really believed that God was a God of Love and Mercy. Anyway, though for fear of death I may kill tigers, snakes, fleas, mosquitoes and the like, I ever pray for illu-

mination that will shed all fear of death and thus refusing to take life, know the better way, for:

Taught by the Power that pities me,
I learn to pity them.⁴⁵

Highest Ideal

My non-violence is not merely kindness to all living creatures. The emphasis laid on the sacredness of sub-human life in Jainism is understandable. But that can never mean that one is to be kind to this life in preference to human life. While writing about the sacredness of such life, I take it that the sacredness of human life has been taken for granted. The former has been over-emphasized. And while putting it into practice, the idea has undergone distortion. For instance, there are many who derive complete satisfaction in feeding ants. It would appear that the theory has become a wooden, lifeless dogma. Hypocrisy and distortion are passing current under the name of religion.

Ahimsa is the highest ideal. It is meant for the brave, never the cowardly. To benefit by others' killing and delude oneself into the belief that one is being very religious and non-violent is sheer self-deception.⁴⁶

Doctrine of Non-killing

My *ahimsa* is my own. I am not able to accept in its entirety the doctrine of non-killing of animals. I have no feeling in me to save the life of these animals who devour or cause hurt to man. I consider it wrong to help in the increase of their progeny. Therefore, I will not feed ants, monkeys or dogs. I will never sacrifice a man's life in order to save theirs.

Thinking along these lines, I have come to the conclusion that to do away with monkeys where they have become a menace to the well-being of man is pardonable. Such killing becomes a duty. The question may arise as to why this rule should not also apply to human beings. It cannot because however bad, they are as we are. Unlike the animal, God has given man the faculty of reason.⁴⁷

True *ahimsa* demands that, if we must save the society as well as ourselves from the mischief of monkeys and the like, we have to kill them. The general rule is that we must avoid violence to the utmost extent possible. Non-violence for the society is necessarily different from that for the individual. One living apart from society may defy all precaution, not so society as such.⁴⁸

90. NO CULTURAL ISOLATION FOR ME

I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave.⁴⁹

Nothing can be farther from my thought than that we should become exclusive or erect barriers. But I do respectfully contend that an appreciation of other cultures can fitly follow, never precede, an appreciation and assimilation of our own.

It is my firm opinion that no culture has treasures so rich as ours has. We have not known it, we have been made even to deprecate its study and depreciate its value. We have almost ceased to live it. An academic grasp without practice behind it is like an embalmed corpse, perhaps lovely to look at, but nothing to inspire or ennoble.

My religion forbids me to belittle or disregard other cultures, as it insists under pain of civil suicide upon imbibing and living my own.⁵⁰

Indian Culture a Synth

It stands for synthesis of the different cultures that have come to stay in India, that have influenced Indian life, and that, in their turn, have themselves been influenced by the spirit of the soil. This synthesis will

naturally be of the Swadeshi type, where each culture is assured its legitimate place. . . .⁵¹

It [Indian civilization] is a mingling of the cultures represented by the different faiths and influenced by the geographic and other environments in which the cultures have met. Thus Islamic culture is not the same in Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and India, but it is itself influenced by the conditions of respective countries. Indian culture is, therefore, Indian. It is neither Hindu, Islamic nor any other, wholly. It is a fusion of all and essentially Eastern. And everyone who calls himself or herself an Indian is bound to treasure that culture, be its trustee and resist any attack upon it.⁵²

The Indian culture of our times is in the making. Many of us are striving to produce a blend of all the cultures which seem today to be in clash with one another. No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive.

There is no such thing as pure Aryan culture in existence today in India. Whether the Aryans were indigenous to India or were unwelcome intruders does not interest me much. What does interest me is the fact that my remote ancestors blended with one another with the utmost freedom and we of the present generation are a result of that blend.

Whether we are doing any good to the country of our birth and the tiny globe which sustains us or whether we are a burden, the future alone will show.⁵³

Either people of different faiths having lived together in friendship have produced a beautiful blend of cultures, which we shall strive to perpetuate and increasingly strengthen the shape [of], or we shall cast about for the day when there was only one religion represented in Hindustan and retrace our steps to that exclusive culture.

It is just possible that we might not be able to find any such historical date and if we do and we retrace our

steps, we shall throw our culture back to that ugly period and deservedly earn the execration of the universe.⁵⁴

Western Culture

Of myself, whilst I have freely acknowledged my debt to Western culture, I can say that whatever service I have been able to render to the nation has been due *entirely* to the retention by me of Eastern culture to the extent it has been possible. I should have been thoroughly useless to the masses as an anglicized, denationalized being, knowing little of, caring less for and perhaps even despising their ways, habits, thoughts and aspirations.⁵⁵

European civilization is no doubt suited for the Europeans, but it will mean ruin for India if we endeavour to copy it. This is not to say that we may not adopt and assimilate whatever may be good and capable of assimilation by us, as it does not also mean that even the Europeans will not have to part with whatever evil might have crept into it.

The incessant search for material comforts and their multiplication is such an evil; and I make bold to say that the Europeans themselves will have to remodel their outlook if they are not to perish under the weight of the comforts to which they are becoming slaves. It may be that my reading is wrong, but I know that for India to run after the Golden Fleece is to court certain death.

Let us engrave on our hearts the motto of a Western philosopher, 'Plain living and high thinking'.

Today it is certain that the millions cannot have high living and we the few who profess to do the thinking for the masses run the risk, in a vain search after higher living, of missing high thinking.⁵⁶

Cultural Domination of the West

I think that nobody else can protect our culture for us. We have to protect it ourselves and can destroy it by our folly.⁵⁷

Though we are politically free, we are barely free from the subtle domination of the West. I have nothing

to say to that school of politicians who believe that knowledge can only come from the West. Nor do I subscribe to the belief that nothing good came out of the West. I do fear, however, that we are unable as yet to come to a correct decision in the matter.

It is to be hoped that no one contends that, because we seem to be politically free from foreign domination, the mere fact gives us freedom from the more subtle influence of the foreign language and foreign thought.⁵⁸

Asia for the Asiatics

I do not subscribe to the doctrine of 'Asia for the Asiatics', if it is meant as an anti-European combination. How can we have Asia for the Asiatics unless we are content to let Asia remain a frog in the well? But Asia cannot afford to remain a frog in the well. It has a message for the whole world if only it will live up to it. There is the imprint of Buddhistic influence on the whole of Asia which includes India, China, Japan, Burma, Ceylon and the Malay States. I said to the Burmese and the Ceylonese that they were Buddhist in name, India was Buddhist in reality. I would say the same thing to China and Japan. But for Asia to be not for Asia but the whole world, it has to relearn the message of the Buddha and deliver it to the world. Today it is being denied everywhere. I . . . have no message to give you but this—that you must be true to your ancient heritage. The message is 2,500 years old, but it has not yet been truly lived. But what are 2,500 years? They are but a speck in the cycle of time. The full flower of non-violence which seems to be withering has yet to come to full bloom.⁵⁹

I hope that all the representatives . . . from the different Asian countries will strive their level best to have only one world. They will have to think out ways and means for achieving this goal. If you work with fixed determination, there is no doubt that, in our own generation, we will certainly realize this dream. . . . I will not like to live in this world if it is not to be one. Certainly, I should like to see this dream realized in my life-time.⁶⁰

All eyes are turned on her, India, in particular those of Asia and Africa. . . . India has won a moral victory over Britain because she has fought non-violently and that is why Asiatic countries hope for proper guidance from her. It is the duty of every Indian not to belie their hopes. If Asia and Africa have the right lead given to them by India, it will change the face of the world.⁶¹

One World

God has so ordered this world that no one can keep his goodness or badness exclusively to himself. The whole world is like the human body with its various members. Pain in one member is felt in the whole body. Rot in one part must inevitably poison the whole system.⁶²

Man should earnestly desire the well-being of all God's creation and pray that we may have the strength to do so. In desiring the well-being of all lies his own welfare; he who desires only his own or his community's welfare is selfish and it can never be well with him.⁶³

It is open to both the new States [India and Pakistan] to aim at . . . a family of independent World States which necessarily rules out internal armies. I cannot visualize a dog-in-the-manger policy for India whereby it will become a menace to world peace. . . .

If by India's effort such a world federation of free and independent States is brought into being, the hope of the Kingdom of God, otherwise called Ramarajya, may legitimately be entertained.⁶⁴

Unesco

I am deeply interested in the efforts of the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization to secure peace through educational and cultural activities. I fully appreciate that real security and lasting peace cannot be secured so long as extreme inequalities in education and culture exist as they do among the nations of the world. Light must be carried even to the remotest homes in the less

fortunate countries which are in comparative darkness and I think that, in this cause, the nations which are economically and educationally advanced have a special responsibility.⁶⁵

91. NATIONALISM v. INTERNATIONALISM

Indian Nationalism

I WANT the freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from my free country, so that the resources of my country may be utilized for the benefit of mankind.

Just as the cult of patriotism teaches us today that the individual has to die for the family, the family has to die for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, and the province for the country, even so a country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world. My love, therefore, of nationalism or my idea of nationalism is that my country may become free, that if need be the whole of the country may die, so that the human race may live. There is no room for race hatred there. Let that be our nationalism.⁶⁶

Our nationalism can be no peril to other nations in as much as we will exploit none, just as we will allow none to exploit us. Through Swaraj we will serve the whole world.⁶⁷

For me patriotism is the same as humanity. I am patriotic because I am human and humane. It is not exclusive, I will not hurt England or Germany to serve India. Imperialism has no place in my scheme of life. The law of a patriot is not different from that of the patriarch. And a patriot is so much the less patriot if he is a luke-warm humanitarian. There is no conflict between private and political law.⁶⁸

It is impossible for one to be internationalist without being a nationalist. Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact, i.e., when peoples belonging to different countries have organized themselves and are able to act as one man. It is not nationalism that is evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil. Each wants to profit at the expense of, and rise on the ruin of, the other. Indian nationalism has struck a different path. It wants to organize itself or to find full self-expression for the benefit and service of humanity at large. . . . God having cast my lot in the midst of the people of India, I should be untrue to my Maker if I failed to serve them. If I do not know how to serve them I shall never know how to serve humanity. And I cannot possibly go wrong so long as I do not harm other nations in the act of serving my country.⁶⁹

India Embraces Humanity

I do want to think in terms of the whole world. My patriotism includes the good of mankind in general. Therefore, my service of India includes the service of humanity. . . . The whole scheme for the liberation of India is based upon the development of internal strength. It is a plan of self-purification. The peoples of the West, therefore, can best help the Indian movement by setting apart specialists to study the inwardness of it. Let the specialists come to India with an open mind and in a spirit of humility as befits a searcher after Truth. . . .

I believe in thought-power more than in the power of the word, whether written or spoken. And if the movement that I seek to represent has vitality in it and has divine blessing upon it, it will permeate the whole world without my physical presence in its different parts. . . .

If I can say so without arrogance and with due humility, my message and methods are, indeed, in their essentials for the whole world and it gives me keen satisfaction to know that it has already received a wonderful response in the hearts of a large and daily-growing number of men and women in the West.⁷⁰

With my limitations of which I am painfully conscious, I feel somehow that my experiment must be restricted to a fragment. What may be true of the fragment is likely to be true of the whole. . . . I am pining for the assistance of the whole world. I see it coming. . . . But I know that we shall have to deserve it before it comes upon us like a mighty flood, a flood that cleanses and invigorates.⁷¹

Goal of Brotherhood

My mission is not merely brotherhood of Indian humanity. My mission is not merely freedom of India, though today it undoubtedly engrosses practically the whole of my life and the whole of my time. But through realization of freedom of India I hope to realize and carry on the mission of the brotherhood of man. My patriotism is not an exclusive thing. It is all-embracing and I should reject that patriotism which sought to mount upon the distress or the exploitation of other nationalities. The conception of my patriotism is nothing if it is not always, in every case without exception, consistent with the broadest good of humanity at large. Not only that, but my religion and my patriotism derived from my religion embrace all life. I want to realize brotherhood or identity not merely with the beings called human, but I want to realize identity with all life, even with such things as crawl on earth. I want, if I don't give you a shock, to realize identity with even the crawling things upon earth, because we claim descent from the same God, and that being so, all life in whatever form it appears must be essentially one.⁷²

I am a humble servant of India and, in trying to serve India, I serve humanity at large. I discovered in my early days that the service of India is not inconsistent with the service of humanity. As I grew older in years and, I hope, in wisdom, I saw that the discovery was well-made and, after nearly 50 years of public life, I am able to say today that my faith in the doctrine that the service of one's nation is not inconsistent with the service of the world has grown. It is a good doctrine. Its acceptance alone

will ease the situation in the world and stop the mutual jealousies between nations inhabiting this globe of ours.⁷³

Independence v. Interdependence

Isolated independence is not the goal of the world-States. It is voluntary interdependence.⁷⁴

The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent States warring one against another, but a federation of friendly interdependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off. I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal interdependence rather than independence. . . . I desire the ability to be totally independent without asserting the independence. Any scheme that I would frame, while Britain declares her goal about India to be complete equality within the Empire, would be that of alliance and not of independence without alliance.⁷⁵

Social Inter-relation

Interdependence is and ought to be as much the ideal of man as self-sufficiency. Man is a social being. Without inter-relation with society, he cannot realize his oneness with the universe or suppress his egotism. His social interdependence enables him to test his faith and to prove himself on the touchstone of reality. If man were so placed or could so place himself as to be absolutely above all dependence on his fellow-beings, he would become so proud and arrogant as to be a veritable burden and nuisance to the world. Dependence on society teaches him the lesson of humanity. That a man ought to be able to satisfy most of his essential needs himself is obvious; but it is no less obvious to me that, when self-sufficiency is carried to the length of isolating oneself from society, it almost amounts to sin. A man cannot become self-sufficient even in respect of all the various operations from the growing of cotton to the spinning of the yarn. He has at some stage or other to take the aid of the members of his family. And if one may take help from one's own family, why not from one's neighbours? Or, otherwise, what is the significance of the great saying, 'The world is my family'?⁷⁶

Let us not . . . forget that it is man's social nature which distinguishes him from the brute creation. If it is his privilege to be independent, it is equally his duty to be interdependent. Only an arrogant man will claim to be independent of everybody else and be self-contained.⁷⁷

The Individual

Individual liberty and interdependence are both essential for life in society. Only a Robinson Crusoe can afford to be all self-sufficient. When a man has done all he can for the satisfaction of his essential requirements, he will seek the co-operation of his neighbours for the rest. That will be true co-operation.⁷⁸

Searching of self ennobles, searching of others debases. [We] should learn the art and virtue of corporate life, in which the circumference of co-operation is ever-widening till at last it encircles the whole human race.⁷⁹

There is not a single virtue which aims at, or is content with, the welfare of the individual alone. Conversely, there is not a single offence which does not, directly or indirectly, affect many others besides the actual offender. Hence, whether an individual is good or bad is not merely his own concern, but really the concern of the whole community, nay, of the whole world.⁸⁰

Mankind is one, seeing that all are equally subject to the moral law. All men are equal in God's eyes. There are, of course, differences of race and status and the like, but the higher the status of a man, the greater is his responsibility.⁸¹

I do not believe . . . that an individual may gain spiritually and those who surround him suffer. I believe in *advaita*, I believe in the essential unity of man and, for that matter, of all that lives. Therefore, I believe that if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him and, if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent.⁸²

The logical conclusion of self-sacrifice is that the individual sacrifices himself for the community, the community sacrifices itself for the district, the district for the

province, the province for the nation, and the nation for the world. A drop torn from the ocean perishes without doing any good. If it remains a part of the ocean, it shares the glory of carrying on its bosom a fleet of mighty ships.⁸³

92. RACIALISM

ONE MAN cannot do right in one department of life whilst he is occupied in doing wrong in any other department. Life is one indivisible whole.⁸⁴

My scheme of life, if it draws no distinction between different religionists in India, also draws none between different races. For me, "man is a man for 'a' that."⁸⁵

White Policy

Unseen it ['South Africa's white man's policy'] holds the seeds of a world war.⁸⁶

Does real superiority [of the whites] require outside props in the shape of legislation?⁸⁷

Is a civilization worth the name which requires for its existence the very doubtful prop of racial legislation and lynch law?⁸⁸

Nemesis

One day the black races will rise like the avenging Attila against their white oppressors, unless some one presents to them the weapon of Satyagraha.⁸⁹

. . . It will be a dark blot on the history of the white civilization if lynch law is allowed to have its course in South Africa. I hope that the South African Government and the civilized conscience of mankind will not allow that.⁹⁰

This new caste [system] is worse than the ancient but dying institution of India which has some redeeming features, even while it is dying. But the new civilized edition has none.

It shamelessly proclaims that white civilization requires the erection of legal barriers in order to protect itself against Asiatics and Africans.⁹¹

'White Man's Burden'

The real 'white man's burden' is not insolently to dominate coloured or black people under the guise of protection, it is to desist from the hypocrisy which is eating into them. It is time white men learnt to treat every human being as their equal. There is no mystery about whiteness of the skin. It has repeatedly been proved that, given equal opportunity, a man, be he of any colour or country, is fully equal to any other.

. . . "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you." Or, do they [the whites] take in vain the name of Him who said this? Have they banished from their hearts the great coloured Asiatic who gave to the world the above message?

Do they forget that the greatest of the teachers of mankind were all Asiatics and did not possess a white face? These, if they descended on earth and went to South Africa, will all have to live in the segregated areas and be classed as Asiatics and coloured people unfit by law to be the equals of whites.⁹²

Removal of Racialism

Those who agree that racial inequality must be removed and yet do nothing to fight the evil are impotent. I cannot have anything to say to such people. After all, the underdogs will have to earn their own salvation. . . . The solution is largely in India's hands. If everything is all right in India internally, she is likely to play an effective part in straightening up affairs. . . .

If the UNO fails to deal justly with the South African Indian dispute, the UNO will lose its prestige. I have no doubt that the UNO can prosper only if it is just.⁹³

93. WAR AND PEACE

My Participation in War

EVEN AFTER introspection during all these years, I feel that, in the circumstances in which I found myself, I was bound to adopt the course I did both during the Boer War and the Great European War and, for that matter, the so-called Zulu 'rebellion' of Natal in 1906.

Life is governed by a multitude of forces. It would be smooth sailing if one could determine the course of one's actions only by one general principle whose application at a given moment was too obvious to need even a moment's reflection. But I cannot recall a single act which could be so easily determined.

Being a confirmed war resister, I have never given myself training in the use of destructive weapons in spite of opportunities to take such training. It was perhaps thus that I escaped direct destruction of human life. But so long as I lived under a system of Government based on force and voluntarily partook of the many facilities and privileges it created for me, I was bound to help that Government to the extent of my ability when it was engaged in a war, unless I non-co-operated with the Government and renounced to the utmost of my capacity the privileges it offered me.

Let me take an illustration. I am a member of an institution which holds a few acres of land whose crops are in imminent peril from monkeys. I believe in the sacredness of all life and hence I regard it as a breach of *ahimsa* to inflict any injury on the monkeys. But I do not hesitate to instigate and direct an attack on the monkeys in order to save the crops. I would like to avoid this evil. I can avoid it by leaving or breaking up the institution. I do not do so because I do not expect to be able to find a society where there will be no agriculture and, therefore, no destruction of some life. In fear and trembling, in humility

and penance, I therefore participate in the injury inflicted on the monkeys, hoping some day to find a way out. . . .

Even so did I participate in the three acts of war. I could not, it would be madness for me to sever my connexion with the society to which I belong. And on those three occasions, I had no thought of non-co-operating with the British Government. My position regarding that Government is totally different today and hence I should not voluntarily participate in its wars and I should risk imprisonment and even the gallows if I was forced to take up arms or otherwise take part in its military operations.⁹⁴

National Militia

... If there was a National Government, whilst I should not take a direct part in any war, I can conceive occasions when it would be my duty to vote for the military training of those who wish to take it. For I know that all its members do not believe in non-violence to the extent I do. It is not possible to make a person or a society non-violent by compulsion.⁹⁵

I have become by force of circumstances a teacher of non-violence. I claim to enforce my teaching in my own life to the best of my ability and I feel that I have the strength to resist war in my own person.

I would support the formation of a National Militia under Swaraj, if only because I realize that people cannot be made non-violent by compulsion. Today, I am teaching the people how to meet a national crisis by non-violent means.

But it is one thing to adopt non-violence for a specific purpose in a time of crisis, and quite another thing to advocate its adoption by all for all time as a philosophy of life. Not that I consider such adoption to be impossible. But I lack the strength for such a mission. I may not, therefore, resist the formation of a national militia. Only, I cannot join it myself. I feel quite clearly within me that a militia is unnecessary, but I have not the word that would carry conviction to others.⁹⁶

Working of Non-violence

Non-violence works in a most mysterious manner. Often a man's actions defy analysis in terms of non-violence; equally often, his actions may wear the appearance of violence when he is absolutely non-violent in the highest sense of the term and is subsequently found so to be. All I can then claim for my conduct is that it was, in the instances cited, actuated in the interests of non-violence. There was no thought of sordid national or any other interest at the sacrifice of some other interest. . . .

For me non-violence is not a mere philosophical principle. It is the rule and the breath of my life. I know I fail often, sometimes consciously, more often unconsciously. It is a matter not of the intellect but of the heart. True guidance comes by constant waiting upon God, by utmost humility, self-abnegation, by being ever ready to sacrifice one's self. Its practice requires fearlessness and courage of the highest order. I am painfully aware of my failings.

But the Light within me is steady and clear. There is no escape for any of us save through truth and non-violence. I know that war is wrong, is an unmitigated evil. I know too that it has got to go. I firmly believe that freedom won through bloodshed or fraud is no freedom. . . . Not violence, not untruth, but non-violence, Truth is the law of our being.⁹⁷

A non-violent man will instinctively prefer direct participation to indirect in a system which is based on violence and to which he has to belong without any choice being left to him. I belong to a world which is partly based on violence. If I have only a choice between paying for the army of soldiers to kill my neighbours or to be a soldier myself, I would, as I must, consistently with my creed, enlist as a soldier in the hope of controlling the forces of violence and even of converting my comrades.⁹⁸

Military Service

Merely to refuse military service is not enough. To refuse to render military service when the particular time arrives is to do the thing after all the time for combating

the evil is practically gone. Military service is only a symptom of the disease which is deeper. I suggest to you that those who are not on the register of military service are equally participating in the crime if they support the State otherwise. He or she who supports a State organized in the military way—whether directly or indirectly—participates in the sin. Each man, old or young, takes part in the sin by contributing to the maintenance of the State by paying the taxes. That is why I said to myself during the war that, so long as I ate wheat supported by the army, whilst I was doing everything short of being a soldier, it was best for me to enlist in the army and be shot; otherwise I should retire to the mountains and eat food grown by nature. Therefore, all those who want to stop military service can do so by withdrawing all co-operation. Refusal of military service is much more superficial than non-co-operation with the whole system which supports the State. But then one's opposition becomes so swift and so effective that you run the risk of not only being marched to jail but being thrown into the streets.⁹⁹

Resistance to War

When two nations are fighting, the duty of a votary of *ahimsa* is to stop the war. He who is not equal to that duty, he who has no power of resisting war, he who is not qualified to resist war, may take part in war and yet whole-heartedly try to free himself, his nation and the world from war.¹⁰⁰

It is . . . [a matter] of deep conviction [with me] that war is an unmixed evil. I would not yield to any one in my detestation of war. But conviction is one thing, correct practice is another. The very thing that one war resister may do in the interest of his mission may repel another war resister who may do the exact opposite and yet both may hold the same view about war. This contradiction arises because of the bewildering complexity of human nature. I can only, therefore, plead for mutual toleration even among professors of the same creed.¹⁰¹

All activity for stopping war must prove fruitless so long as the causes of war are not understood and radically

dealt with. Is not the prime cause of modern wars the inhuman race for exploitation of the so-called weaker races of the earth?¹⁰²

If war had no redeeming feature, no courage and heroism behind it, it would be a despicable thing, and would not need speeches to destroy it. But what I would suggest to you is infinitely nobler than war in all its branches, including Red Cross organization. Believe me there are many more million prisoners—slaves of their passions and conditions of life, and believe me that there are millions wounded by their own folly, and millions of wrecked homes on the face of the earth. The peace societies of tomorrow would, therefore, have enough work cut out for them when they take up international service....¹⁰³

What is happening today is disregard of the law of non-violence and enthronement of violence as if it were an eternal law. . . . We see today a mad race for outdoing one another in the matter of armaments. And if, when the clash comes, as it is bound to come one day, the democracies win, they will do so only because they will have the backing of their peoples who imagine that they have a voice in their own government. . . .¹⁰⁴

World War II

Personally, I think the end of this giant war will be what happened in the fabled Mahabharata war. The *Mahabharata* has been aptly described by a Travancorean as the Permanent History of Man. What is described in that great epic is happening today before our very eyes. The warring nations are destroying themselves with such fury and ferocity that the end will be mutual exhaustion. The victor will share the fate that awaited the surviving Pandavas. The mighty warrior Arjuna was looted in broad daylight by a petty robber. And out of this holocaust must arise a new order for which the exploited millions of toilers have so long thirsted. The prayers of peace-lovers cannot go in vain. Satyagraha is itself an unmistakable mute prayer of an agonized soul.¹⁰⁵

Hatred, [some people argue] cannot be turned into love. Those who believed in violence will naturally use it

by saying, "Kill your enemy, injure him and his property wherever you can, whether openly or secretly as necessity requires." The result will be deeper hatred and counter hatred and vengeance let loose on both sides. The recent war, whose embers have yet hardly died, loudly proclaims the bankruptcy of this use of hatred. And it remains to be seen whether the so-called victors have won or whether they have not depressed themselves in seeking and trying to depress their enemies."¹⁰⁶

94. NUCLEAR WAR

The Atom Bomb

THERE HAVE been cataclysmic changes in the world. Do I still adhere to my faith in truth and non-violence? Has not the atom bomb exploded that faith? Not only has it not done so, but it has clearly demonstrated to me that the twins constitute the mightiest force in the world. Before it the atom bomb is of no effect. The two opposing forces are wholly different in kind, the one moral and spiritual, the other physical and material. The one is infinitely superior to the other which by its very nature has an end. The force of the spirit is ever progressive and endless. Its full expression makes it unconquerable in the world. In saying this I know that I have said nothing new. I merely bear witness to the fact. What is more, the force resides in everybody, man, woman and child, irrespective of the colour of the skin. Only, in many it lies dormant. But it is capable of being awakened by judicious training.

It is further to be observed that, without the recognition of this truth and due effort to realize it, there is no escape from self-destruction. The remedy lies in every individual training himself for self-expression in every walk of life, irrespective of response by the neighbours.¹⁰⁷

Has not the atom bomb proved the futility of all violence?¹⁰⁸

Ahimsa the Answer

It has been suggested by American friends that the atom bomb will bring in *ahimsa* (non-violence) as nothing else can. It will, if it is meant that its destructive power will so disgust the world that it will turn it away from violence for the time being. This is very like a man glutting himself with dainties to the point of nausea and turning away from them only to return with redoubled zeal after the effect of nausea is well over. Precisely in the same manner will the world return to violence with renewed zeal after the effect of disgust is worn out.

Often does good come out of evil. But that is God's, not man's, plan. Man knows that only evil can come out of evil, as good out of good.

That atomic energy, though harnessed by American scientists and army men for destructive purposes, may be utilized by other scientists for humanitarian purposes, is undoubtedly within the realm of possibility. But that is not what was meant by my American friends. They were not so simple as to put a question which connoted an obvious truth. An incendiary uses fire for his destructive and nefarious purpose, a housewife makes daily use of it in preparing nourishing food for mankind.

So far as I can see, the atomic bomb has deadened the finest feeling that has sustained mankind for ages. There used to be the so-called laws of war which made it tolerable. Now we know the naked truth. War knows no law except that of might. The atom bomb brought an empty victory to the Allied arms, but it resulted for the time being in destroying the soul of Japan. What has happened to the soul of the destroying nation is yet too early to see. Forces of nature act in a mysterious manner. We can but solve the mystery by deducing the unknown result from the known results of similar events. A slave-holder cannot hold a slave without putting himself or his deputy in the cage holding the slave. Let no one run away with the idea that I wish to put in a defence of Japanese misdeeds in pursuance of Japan's unworthy ambition. The difference was only one of degree. I assume that Japan's greed was more

unworthy. But the greater unworthiness conferred no right on the less unworthy of destroying without mercy men, women and children of Japan in a particular area.

The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counter-bombs, even as violence cannot be by counter-violence. Mankind has to get out of violence only through non-violence. Hatred can be overcome only by love. Counter-hatred only increases the surface as well as the depth of hatred. I am aware that I am repeating what I have many times stated before and practised to the best of my ability and capacity. What I first stated was itself nothing new. It is as old as the hills. Only, I recited no copy book maxim, but definitely announced what I believe in every fibre of my being. Sixty years of practice in various walks of life has only enriched the belief which the experience of friends has fortified. It is, however, the central truth by which one can stand alone without flinching. I believe in what Max Muller said years ago, namely, that truth needed to be repeated as long as there were men who disbelieved it.¹⁰⁹

“The very frightfulness of the atom bomb will not force non-violence on the world? If all nations are armed with the atom bomb, they will refrain from using it as it will mean absolute destruction for all concerned?” I am of the opinion that it will not. The violent man’s eye would be lit up with the prospect of the much greater amount of destruction and death which he could now wreak.¹¹⁰

Antidote to the Bomb

I regard the employment of the atom bomb for the wholesale destruction of men, women and children as the most diabolical use of science.

“What is the antidote? Has it antiquated non-violence?” No. On the contrary, non-violence is the only thing that is now left in the field. It is the only thing that the atom bomb cannot destroy. I did not move a muscle when I first heard that the atom bomb had wiped out

Hiroshima. On the contrary, I said to myself, 'Unless now the world adopts non-violence, it will spell certain suicide for mankind.'¹¹¹

I have no doubt, that unless big nations shed their desire of exploitation and the spirit of violence of which war is the natural expression and atom bomb the inevitable consequence, there is no hope for peace in the world. I tried to speak out during the War and wrote open letters to the British people, to Hitler and to the Japanese and was dubbed a fifth columnist for my pains.¹¹²

Wise Men of the East

The first of these wise men was Zoroaster. He belonged to the East. He was followed by the Buddha who belonged to the East—India. Who followed the Buddha? Jesus, who came from the East. Before Jesus was Moses who belonged to Palestine though he was born in Egypt. After Jesus came Mahomed. I omit any reference to Krishna and Rama and other lights. I do not call them lesser lights, but they are less known to the literary world. All the same, I do not know a single person in the world to match these men of Asia. And then what happened? Christianity became disfigured when it went to the West. I am sorry to have to say that. I would not talk any further. . . .

Message of Asia

What I want you to understand is the message of Asia. It is not to be learnt through the Western spectacles or by imitating the atom bomb. If you want to give a message to the West, it must be the message of love and the message of truth. . . . In this age of democracy, in this age of awakening of the poorest of the poor, you can redeliver this message with the greatest emphasis. You will complete the conquest of the West not through vengeance because you have been exploited, but with real understanding. I am sanguine if all of you put your hearts together—not merely heads—to understand the secret of the message these wise men of the East have left to us, and if we really become worthy of that great message, the conquest of the West will be completed. This conquest will be loved by the West itself.

The West today is pining for wisdom. It is despairing of a multiplication of the atom bombs, because atom bombs mean utter destruction not merely of the West but of the whole world, as if the prophecy of the Bible is going to be fulfilled and there is to be a perfect deluge. It is up to you to tell the world of its wickedness and sin—that is the heritage your teachers and my teachers have taught Asia.¹¹³

The weapon of violence, even if it is the atom bomb, becomes useless when it is matched against true non-violence.¹¹⁴

95. THE WAY TO PEACE

(a) Disarmament

I do suggest that the doctrine [of non-violence] holds good also as between States and States. I know that I am treading on delicate ground if I refer to the late War. But I fear I must, in order to make the position clear. It was a war of aggrandizement, as I have understood, on either part. It was a war for dividing the spoils of the exploitation of weaker races—otherwise euphemistically called the world commerce. . . . It would be found that, before general disarmament in Europe commences, as it must some day unless Europe is to commit suicide, some nation will have to dare to disarm herself and take large risks. The level of non-violence in that nation, if that ever happily comes to pass, will naturally have risen so high as to command universal respect. Her judgments will be unerring, her decisions firm, her capacity for heroic self-sacrifice will be great, and she will want to live as much for other nations as for herself.¹¹⁵

Like opium production, the world manufacture of swords needs to be restricted. The sword is probably responsible for more misery in the world than opium.¹¹⁶

Duty of Neutral State

“Since disarmament chiefly depends on Great Powers why should Switzerland, which is a small State and a neutral State, be asked to disarm itself?”*

It is from the neutral ground of your country that I am speaking to all other Powers and not only to Switzerland. If you won't carry this message to other parts of Europe, I shall be absolved from all blame. And seeing that Switzerland is a neutral territory and non-aggressive nation, there is all the more reason why Switzerland should not need an army. Secondly, it is through your hospitality and by reason of your occupying the vantage ground that you have nationals coming to you. It should be possible for you to give to the world a lesson in disarmament and show that you are brave enough to do without an army.¹¹⁷

“How could a disarmed neutral country allow other nations to be destroyed? But for our army which was waiting ready at our frontier during the last war we should have been ruined.”*

At the risk of being considered a visionary or a fool I must answer this question in the only manner I know. It would be cowardly of a neutral country to allow an army to devastate a neighbouring country. But there are two ways in common between soldiers of war and soldiers of non-violence, and if I had been a citizen of Switzerland and President of the Federal State, what I would have done would be to refuse passage to the invading army by refusing all supplies. Secondly, by re-enacting a Thermopylae in Switzerland, you would have presented a living wall of men and women and children, inviting invaders to walk over your corpses. You may say that such a thing is beyond human experience and endurance. I say that it is not so. It was quite possible. Last year in Gujarat, women stood *lathi* charges unflinchingly, and in Peshawar, thousands stood hails of bullets without resorting to violence. Imagine these men and women staying in

*Questions by a Swiss national

front of an army requiring a safe passage to another country. The army would be brutal enough to walk over them, you might say. I would then say you will still have done your duty by allowing yourself to be annihilated. An army that dares to pass over the corpses of innocent men and women would not be able to repeat that experiment. You may, if you wish, refuse to believe in such courage on the part of the masses of men and women, but, then, you would have to admit that non-violence is made of sterner stuff. It was never conceived as a weapon of the weak but of the stoutest hearts.¹¹⁸

Great Powers and Disarmament

It is . . . open to the Great Powers to take it [non-violence] up any day and cover themselves with glory and earn the eternal gratitude of posterity. If they or any of them could shed the fear of destruction, if they disarmed themselves, they will automatically help the rest to regain their sanity. But, then, these Great Powers have to give up imperialistic ambitions and exploitation of the so-called uncivilized or semi-civilized nations of the earth and revise their mode of life. It means a complete revolution. Great nations can hardly be expected, in the ordinary course, to move spontaneously in a direction the reverse of the one they have followed, and according to their notion of values, from victory to victory. But miracles have happened before and may happen even in this very prosaic age. Who can dare limit God's power of undoing wrong? One thing is certain. If the mad race for armaments continues, it is bound to result in a slaughter such as has never occurred in history. If there is a victor left, the very victory will be a living death for the nation that emerges victorious. There is no escape from the impending doom save through a bold and unconditional acceptance of the non-violent method with all its glorious implications.¹¹⁹

(b) Gangsterism v. Non-violence

"What to do with 'gangster' nations, if I may use the expression frequently used? There was individual gangsterism in America. It has been put down by strong police measures both local and national. Could not we do something

similar for gangsterism between nations, as instanced in Manchuria—the nefarious use of the opium poison, in Abyssinia, in Spain, in the sudden seizure of Austria, and then, the case of Czechoslovakia?”

If the best minds of the world have not imbibed the spirit of non-violence, they would have to meet gangsterism in the orthodox way. But that would only show that we have not got far beyond the law of the jungle, that we have not yet learnt to appreciate the heritage that God has given us, that, in spite of the teaching of Christianity which is 1900 years old and of Hinduism and Buddhism which are older, and even of Islam (if I have read it aright), we have not made much headway as human beings. But, whilst I would understand the use of force by those who have not the spirit of non-violence in them, I would have those who know non-violence to throw their whole weight in demonstrating that even gangsterism has to be met by non-violence. For, ultimately, force, however justifiably used, will lead us into the same morass as the force of Hitler and Mussolini. There will be just a difference of degree. You and I who believe in non-violence must use it at the critical moment. We may not despair of touching the hearts even of gangsters, even if, for the moment, we may seem to be striking our heads against a blind wall.¹²⁰

Non-violent Alternative

When the position is examined in terms of non-violence, I must say it is unbecoming of a great nation of 400 millions, a nation as cultured as China, to repel Japanese aggression by resorting to Japan's own methods. If the Chinese had non-violence of my conception, there would be no use left for the latest machinery for destruction which Japan possesses. The Chinese would say to Japan, 'Bring all your machinery, we present half of our population to you. But the remaining 200 millions won't bend their knee to you.' If the Chinese did that, Japan would become China's slave.¹²¹

... For the Poles to stand valiantly against the German hordes, vastly superior in numbers, military equipment and strength, was almost non-violence. I should not

mind repeating that statement over and over again. You must give its full value to the word 'almost'. But we are 400 millions here. If we were to organize a big army and prepare ourselves to fight foreign aggression, how could we by any stretch of imagination call ourselves almost non-violent, let alone non-violent? The Poles were unprepared for the way in which the enemy swooped down upon them. When we talk of armed preparation, we contemplate preparation to meet any violent combination with our superior violence. If India ever prepared herself that way, she would constitute the greatest menace to world peace. For, if we take that path, we will also have to choose the path of exploitation like the European nations.¹²²

(c) Peace through Love

It may be long before the law of love will be recognized in international affairs. The machineries of Governments stand between and hide the hearts of one people from those of another. Yet . . . we can see how the world is moving steadily to realize that between nation and nation, as between man and man, force has failed to solve problems, but that the economic sanction of non-co-operation is far more mighty and conclusive than armies and navies.¹²³

Till a new energy is harnessed and put on wheels, the captains of older energies will treat the innovation as theoretical, impractical, idealistic and so on. It may take long to lay the wires for international love, but the sanction of international non-co-operation in preference to continued physical compulsion . . . is a distinct progress towards the ultimate and real solution.¹²⁴

Enduring Peace

Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in the Godliness of human nature. Methods hereto adopted have failed because rock-bottom sincerity on the part of those who have striven has been lacking. Not that they have realized this lack. Peace is unattained by part performance of conditions, even as a chemical combination is impossible without complete fulfilment of the

conditions of attainment thereof. If the recognized leaders of mankind who have control over the engines of destruction were wholly to renounce their use, with full knowledge of its implications, permanent peace can be obtained. This is clearly impossible without the Great Powers of the earth renouncing their imperialistic design. This, again, seems impossible without great nations ceasing to believe in soul-destroying competition and to desire to multiply wants and, therefore, increase their material possessions. It is my conviction that the root of the evil is want of a living faith in a living God. It is a first-class human tragedy that peoples of the earth who claim to believe in the message of Jesus, whom they describe as the Prince of Peace, show little of that belief in actual practice. It is painful to see sincere Christian divines limiting the scope of Jesus' message to select individuals. I have been taught from my childhood and tested the truth by experience that the primary virtues of mankind are possible of cultivation by the meanest of the human species. It is this undoubted universal possibility that distinguishes the humans from the rest of God's creation. If even one nation were unconditionally to perform the supreme act of renunciation, many of us would see in our life-time visible peace established on earth.¹²⁵

Peace will never come until the Great Powers courageously decide to disarm themselves. It seems to me that recent events must force that belief on the Great Powers. I have an implicit faith, a faith that today burns brighter than ever, after half a century's experience of unbroken practice of non-violence, that mankind can only be saved through non-violence which is the central teaching of the Bible as I have understood the Bible.¹²⁶

No 'Appeasement'

I have never admitted any partiality for 'appeasement' which has become a term of reproach in the English language. Peace I want among all mankind, but I do not want peace at any cost, and certainly not by placating the aggressor or at the cost of honour. Anyone, therefore, who thinks that I am guilty of either vice will do great harm to the immediate purpose.¹²⁷

My experience, daily growing stronger and richer, tells me that there is no peace for individuals or for nations without practising Truth and Non-violence to the uttermost extent possible for man. The policy of retaliation has never succeeded.¹²⁸

Non-violent Society

It has become the fashion these days to say that society cannot be organized or run on non-violent lines. I join issue on that point. In a family, when a father slaps his delinquent child, the latter does not think of retaliating. He obeys his father not because of the deterrent effect of the slap, but because of the offended love which he senses behind it. That, in my opinion, is an epitome of the way in which society is or should be governed. What is true of the family must be true of society which is but a larger family.¹²⁹

End to War

I reiterate my conviction that there will be no peace for the Allies or the world unless they shed their belief in the efficacy of war and its accompanying terrible deception and fraud and are determined to hammer out real peace based on freedom and equality of all races and nations. Exploitation and domination of one nation over another can have no place in a world striving to put an end to all wars. In such a world only, the militarily weaker nations will be free from the fear of intimidation or exploitation.¹³⁰

Not to return violence by violence but neutralize it by withholding one's hand and, at the same time, refusing to submit to the [aggressor's] demand [backed by force] is the only civilized way of going on in the world. Any other course can only lead to a race for armaments, interspersed by periods of peace which is by necessity and brought about by exhaustion, when preparations will be going on for violence of a superior order. Peace through superior violence inevitably leads to the atom bomb and all that it stands for. It is the completest negation of non-violence and of democracy which is not possible without the former.¹³¹

I can say with confidence that if the world is to have peace, non-violence is the means to that end and no other.¹³²

Pacifism and Pacifists

A true pacifist is a true satyagrahi. The latter acts by faith and, therefore, is not concerned about the result, for he knows that it is assured when the action is true.

... Pacifists have to prove their faith by resolutely refusing to do anything with war, whether of defence or offence.¹³³

... Pacifists have to live their lives in strict accord with the Sermon on the Mount, and they will find immediately that there is much to give up and much to remodel. The greatest thing that they have to deny themselves is the fruit of imperialism. . . .¹³⁴

96. THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

PERHAPS NEVER before has there been so much speculation about the future as there is today. Will our world always be one of violence? Will there always be poverty, starvation, misery? Will we have a firmer and wide belief in religion, or will the world be godless? If there is to be a great change in society, how will that change be wrought? By war, or revolution? Or will it come peacefully?

Different men give different answers to these questions, each man drawing the plan of tomorrow's world as he hopes and wishes it to be. I answer not only out of belief but out of conviction. The world of tomorrow will be, must be, a society based on non-violence. That is the first law; out of it all other blessings will flow. It may seem a distant goal, an impractical Utopia. But it is not in the least unobtainable, since it can be worked for here and now. An individual can adopt the way of life of the future—the non-violent way—without having to wait for others to do so.

And if an individual can do it, cannot whole groups of individuals? Whole nations? Men often hesitate to make a beginning because they feel that the objective cannot be achieved in its entirety. This attitude of mind is precisely our greatest obstacle to progress—an obstacle that each man, if he only wills it, can clear away.

Equal Distribution

Equal distribution—the second great law of tomorrow's world as I see it—grows out of non-violence. It implies not that the world's goods shall be arbitrarily divided up, but that each man shall have the wherewithal to supply his natural needs, no more. As a crude example, if one man requires a quarter-pound of flour per week and another needs five pounds, each should not be given arbitrarily a quarter-pound, or five pounds; both should be able to satisfy their wants.

Here we come to perhaps the most vital question connected with the shaping of tomorrow's world. How is this equal distribution to be brought about? Must the wealthy be dispossessed of all their holdings?

Non-violence answers no. Nothing that is violent can be of lasting benefit to mankind. Forcible dispossession would deprive society of many great gifts; the wealthy man knows how to create and build, his abilities must not be lost. Instead, he must be left in possession of his wealth so that he may use what he reasonably requires for his personal needs and act as trustee for the remainder, to be expended for the benefit of society. There have been and are such men. To my mind, as soon as a man looks upon himself as a servant of society, earns for its sake, spends for its sake, then his earnings are good and his business venture is constructive.

Change in Human Nature

But does not this whole idea of non-violence imply a change in human nature? And does history at any time record such a change? Emphatically it does. Many an individual has turned from the mean, personal, acquisitive point of view to one that sees society as a whole and

works for its benefit. If there has been such a change in one man, there can be the same change in many.

The Future

I see no poverty in the world of tomorrow, no wars, no revolutions, no bloodshed. And in that world there will be a faith in God greater and deeper than ever in the past. The very existence of the world, in a broad sense, depends on religion. All attempts to root it out will fail.¹³⁵

The structure of a world federation can be raised only on a foundation of non-violence, and violence will have to be totally given up in world affairs.¹³⁶

XV: OBITER DICTA

DEATH

For many years I have accorded intellectual assent to the proposition that death is only a big change in life and nothing more, and should be welcome whenever it arrives. I have deliberately made a supreme attempt to cast out from my heart all fear whatsoever including the fear of death.

Still I remember occasions in my life when I have rejoiced at the thought of approaching death as one might rejoice at the prospect of meeting a long-lost friend. Thus, man often remains weak notwithstanding all his efforts to be strong, and knowledge which stops at the head and does not penetrate into the heart is of but little use in the critical times of living experience.

Then again, the strength of the spirit within mostly evaporates when a person gets and accepts support from outside. A *satyagrahi* must always be on his guard against such temptations.¹

It is as clear to me as daylight that life and death are but phases of the same thing, the reverse and obverse of the same coin. In fact, tribulation and death seem to me to present a phase far richer than happiness or life. What is life worth without trials and tribulation which are the salt of life?²

Fear of Death

If someone were to tell me, in order to avoid death, to retire to the Himalayas until the end of this year, I should not do so. For I know that death is inevitable, no matter what precautions man deludes himself with. I would like you to appreciate that I am one of the very few among the public men in India who know how to preserve their health. God knows what work to take out of me. He will not permit me to live a moment longer than He needs me for His work.³

Death is a companion and friend. It is well with those who have died bravely.⁴

None should fear death. Death is inevitable for every human being. But if we die smiling, we will enter into a new life.⁵

Man does not live but to escape death. If he does so, he is advised not to do so.

He is advised to love death as well as life, if not more so. A hard saying, harder to act up to, one may say. Every worthy act is difficult. Ascent is always difficult. Descent is easy and often slippery. Life becomes livable only to the extent that death is treated as a friend, never as an enemy.

To conquer life's temptations summon death to your aid. In order to postpone death, a coward surrenders honour, wife, daughter and all. A courageous man prefers death to the surrender of self-respect.

When the time comes, as it conceivably can, I would not leave my advice to be inferred, but it will be given in precise language.⁶

All must die some day. No one can escape death. Then why be afraid of it? In fact, death is a friend which brings deliverance from sufferings.⁷

Death Duties

Why should there not be death duties? Those sons of millionaires who are of age and yet inherit their parents' wealth are losers for the very inheritance. The nation thus becomes a double loser. For the inheritance should rightly belong to the nation. And the nation loses in that the full faculties of the heirs are not drawn out, being crushed under the load of riches.⁸

Personally, I do not believe in inherited riches. The well-to-do should educate and bring up their children so that they may learn how to be independent. The tragedy is that they do not do so. Their children get some education, they even recite verses in praise of poverty, but they have no compunction about helping themselves to parental wealth.⁹

DESIRE

Man's happiness really lies in contentment. He who is discontented, however much he possesses, becomes a slave to his desires. And really there is no slavery equal to that of his desires. All the sages have declared from the house-tops that man can be his own worst enemy as well as his best friend. To be free or to be a slave lies in his own hands. And what is true for the individual is true for society.¹⁰

DESTINY

I do not know whether time, place and the manner of death are predestined. All I do know is that 'not a blade of grass moves but by His will'. This too I know hazily. What is hazy today will be clear tomorrow or the day after by prayerful waiting.¹¹

Man is supposed to be the maker of his own destiny. It is partly true. He can make his destiny only in so far as he is allowed by the Great Power who overrides all our intentions, all our plans and carries out His own plans.¹²

DETACHMENT

Outwardly, I owe my physical fitness to strict adherence to regular habits in eating, drinking and sleeping and to my partiality for nature cure principles which I had adopted strictly in life since 1901. . . . But, in a still greater measure, it is due to the practice, of detachment of mind.

By detachment I mean that you must not worry whether the desired result follows from your action or not, so long as your motive is pure, your means correct. Really, it means that things will come right in the end if you take care of the means and leave the rest to Him.¹³

If my past conduct does not warrant the full span of life, no matter however correct my present life may be, I can still counteract the effect of past mistakes by attaining complete detachment between the mind and the body. Detachment enables one to overcome the effects of past

faulty practice as well as handicaps of heredity and environment.

Normally speaking, every deviation from the rule of nature, whether ignorant or wilful, e.g., anger, ill-temper, impatience, errors in conjugal life, exacts its toll. But there is this promise that, if you have arrived at complete detachment, you can rub out all these. 'Except ye be born again, ye cannot have everlasting life.'

Conversely, you can have everlasting life if you are 'born again'. There is no hurdle placed before death. You can turn over a new leaf and begin life anew here and now; the past will not disturb its tenor provided you have completely severed yourself from it and its legacy by the axe of detachment.¹⁴

In a moment of introspection, the poet asks himself: 'O man, why have you left off taking God's name? You have not given up anger or lust or greed, but you have forgotten truth. What a tragedy to save worthless pennies and to let go the priceless gem of God's love! Why could you not, O fool, renounce all vanities and throw yourself on the grace of God alone?' This does not mean that, if one has wealth, it should be thrown away, and wife and children should be turned out of doors. It simply means that one must give up attachment to these things and dedicate one's all to God and make use of His gifts to serve Him only. It also means that, if we take His name with all our being, we are automatically weaned from all lust, untruth and baser passions.¹⁵

A burning passion coupled with absolute detachment is the key to all success.¹⁶

DIET

... It is wrong to over-estimate the importance of food in the formation of character or in subjugating the flesh. Diet is a powerful factor not to be neglected. But to sum up all religion in terms of diet, as is often done in India, is as wrong as it is to disregard all restraint in regard to diet and to give full reins to one's appetite. Vegetarianism is one of the priceless gifts of Hinduism. It may not be lightly given up. It is necessary, therefore, to correct the error that vegetarianism has made us weak in mind or

body, or passive or inert in action. The greatest Hindu reformers have been the activist in their generation and they have invariably been vegetarians. Who could show greater activity than, say, Shankara or Dayanand in their times?

. . . The choice of one's diet is not a thing to be based on faith. It is a matter for every one to reason out for himself. There has grown up, especially in the West, an amount of literature on vegetarianism which any seeker after truth may study with profit. Many eminent medical men have contributed to this literature. Here, in India, we have not needed any encouragement for vegetarianism. For it has been hitherto accepted as the most desirable and the most respectable thing. Those, however, who . . . feel shaken, may study the growing movement towards vegetarianism in the West.¹⁷

Eating to Live

One should eat not in order to please the palate but just to keep the body going. When each organ of sense subserves the body and through the body the soul, its special relish disappears, and then alone does it begin to function in the way nature intended it to do.

Any number of experiments is too small and no sacrifice is too great for attaining this symphony with nature. But, unfortunately, the current is nowadays flowing strongly in the opposite direction. We are not ashamed to sacrifice a multitude of other lives in decorating the perishable body and trying to prolong its existence for a few fleeting moments, with the result that we kill ourselves, both body and soul. In trying to cure one old disease, we give rise to a hundred new ones; in trying to enjoy the pleasures of sense, we lose in the end even our capacity for enjoyment. All this is passing before our very eyes, but there are none so blind as those who will not see.¹⁸

There is a great deal of truth in the saying that man becomes what he eats. The grosser the food the grosser the body.¹⁹

Meat Eating

Abstemiousness from intoxicating drinks and drugs, and from all kinds of foods, especially meat, is undoubtedly a great aid to the evolution of the spirit, but it is by no means an end in itself. Many a man eating meat and with everybody, but living in the fear of God, is nearer his freedom than a man religiously abstaining from meat and many other things, but blaspheming God in every one of his acts.²⁰

Rightly or wrongly, it is part of my religious conviction that man may not eat meat, eggs and the like. There should be a limit even to the means of keeping ourselves alive. Even for life we may not do certain things.²¹

I do not regard flesh-food as necessary for us at any stage and under any clime in which it is possible for human beings ordinarily to live. I hold flesh-food to be unsuited to our species. We err in copying the lower animal world if we are superior to it. Experience teaches that animal food is unsuited to those who would control their passions.²²

I do feel that spiritual progress does demand at some stage that we should cease to kill our fellow-creatures for the satisfaction of our bodily wants.²³

Vegetarianism

I have always been in favour of pure vegetarian diet. But experience has taught me that, in order to keep perfectly fit, vegetarian diet must include milk and milk products such as curds, butter, *ghee*, etc. . . .

But I am convinced that in the vast vegetable kingdom there must be some kind which, while supplying those necessary substances which we derive from milk and meat, is free from their drawbacks, ethical and other.

In my opinion there are definite drawbacks in taking milk or meat. In order to get meat we have to kill. And we are certainly not entitled to any other milk except the mother's milk in our infancy. Over and above the moral drawback, there are others, purely from the point

of view of health. Both milk and meat bring with them the defects of the animal from which they are derived. . . .

All the delicacies of the world cannot equal the relish that hunger gives to food.²⁴

It is my firm conviction that man need take no milk at all beyond the mother's milk that he takes as a baby. His diet should consist of nothing but sunbaked fruits and nuts. He can secure enough nourishment both for the tissues and the nerves from fruits like grapes and nuts like almonds. Restraint of the sexual and other passions becomes easy for a man who lives on such food.²⁵

Food Research

The unlimited capacity of the plant world to sustain man at his highest is a region yet unexplored by modern medical science, which through force of habit pins its faith on the shambles or at least milk and its by-products. It is a duty which awaits discharge by Indian medical men whose tradition is vegetarian. The fast developing researches about vitamins and the possibility of getting the most important of them directly from the sun bid fair to revolutionize many of the accepted theories and beliefs propounded by medical science about food.²⁶

I have found after prolonged experiment and observation that there is no fixed dietetic rule for all constitutions. All that the wisest physicians claim for their advice is that it is likely to benefit in a given case, as in a majority of cases they have found it to answer fairly well. In no branch of science is the scientist so hampered in his research as in the medical. He dare not speak with certainty of the effect of a single drug or food or of the reactions of human bodies. It is and will always remain empirical. The popular saying that one man's food may be another's poison is based on vast experience which finds daily verification. Such being the case, the field for experiment on the part of intelligent men and women is limitless. Laymen ought to acquire a workable knowledge of the body which plays such an important part in the evolution of the soul within. And yet about nothing are we so woefully negligent or ignorant as in regard to our bodies.²⁷

I submit that scientists have not yet explored the hidden possibilities of the innumerable seeds, leaves and fruits for giving the fullest possible nutrition to mankind. For one thing, the tremendous vested interests that have grown round the belief in animal food prevent the medical profession from approaching the question with complete detachment.²⁸

Moral Basis

For remaining staunch to vegetarianism a man requires a moral basis. . . . Because it is for the building of the spirit and not of the body. Man is more than meat. It is the spirit in man for which we are concerned. Therefore, vegetarians should have that moral basis—that a man was not born a carnivorous animal, but born to live on the fruits and herbs that the earth grows.²⁹

Ahimsa is not a matter of dietetics, it transcends it. What a man eats or drinks matters little; it is the self-denial, the self-restraint behind it that matters. By all means practise as much restraint in the choice of the articles of your diet as you like. The restraint is commendable, even necessary, but it touches only the fringe of *ahimsa*. A man may allow himself a wide latitude in the matter of diet and yet may be a personification of *ahimsa* and compel our homage, if his heart overflows with love and melts at another's woe, and has been purged of all passions. On the other hand, a man always overscrupulous in diet is an utter stranger to *ahimsa* and a pitiful wretch, if he is a slave to selfishness and passions and is hard of heart.³⁰

It should be remembered too that mere *jivadaya* (kindness to animals) does not enable us to overcome the 'six deadly enemies' within us, namely lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and falsehood. . . . The *jivadaya* of a person who is steeped in anger and lust, but daily feeds the ants and insects and refrains from killing has hardly anything in it to recommend itself. It is a mechanical performance without any spiritual value. It may even be worse—a hypocritical screen for hiding the corruption within.³¹

DISCIPLINE

Discipline knows no rank. A king who knows its value submits to his page in matters where he appoints him as the sole judge.³²

The highest form of freedom carries with it the greatest measure of discipline and humility. Freedom that comes from discipline and humility cannot be denied, unbridled licence is a sign of vulgarity alike to self and one's neighbours.³³

I can conceive occasions when implicit obedience without waiting for reasoning out causes is a necessity. It is essentially the quality of a soldier. And no nation can make substantial progress without the possession of that quality by a vast number of its people. But occasions for such obedience are rare and must be rare in any well-ordered society.³⁴

There will have to be rigid and iron discipline before we achieve anything great and enduring and that discipline will not come by mere academic argument and appeal to reason and logic. Discipline is learnt in the school of adversity. And when zealous young men will train themselves to responsible work without any shield, they will learn what responsibility and discipline are.³⁵

Voluntary discipline is the first prerequisite of corporate freedom. . . . The need for discipline for a nation on its march towards independence is infinitely greater [than for a troop movement]. Without it, *Ramarajya*, which means the kingdom of God on earth, will remain an empty dream.³⁶

Mass discipline is an essential condition for a people who aspire to be a great nation.³⁷

DIVISION OF LABOUR

Division of labour is a necessity. One-man-show is always undesirable and is a positive hindrance to a system of organization. An organization like the British kingship is not personal. "The king is dead. Long live the king." Hence the saying, 'the king can do no wrong.' A king as an individual may be a rascal, but personified

as an organization, he is perfect in the sense the word 'perfection' is understood in a given society.

The moral is that, however inefficient the persons in charge may be in the beginning stages, in a progressive organization, persons taking charge should be above board and should put the organization first, themselves last. If an attempt is made to organize work through rascals, the organization will always have rascals at its head.³⁸

DOCTORS

The fact remains that the doctors induce us to indulge, and the result is that we have become deprived of self-control and have become effeminate.³⁹

My quarrel with the medical profession in general is that it ignores the soul altogether and strains at nothing in seeking merely to repair such a fragile instrument as the body. Thus ignoring the soul, the profession puts men at its mercy and contributes to the diminution of human dignity and self-control.

I note with thankfulness that, in the West, a school of thought is rising slowly but surely which takes count of the soul in trying to repair a diseased body and which, therefore, relies less on drugs and more on nature as a powerful healing agent.⁴⁰

Healers of Soul

We want healers of souls rather than of bodies. The multiplicity of hospitals and medical men is no sign of true civilization. The less we and others pamper our bodies the better for us and the world.⁴¹

Instead of using the body as a temple of God, we use it as a vehicle for indulgences, and are not ashamed to run to medical men for help in our effort to increase them and abuse the earthly tabernacle.⁴²

The mere title of a doctor is no criterion; a real doctor is he who is a true servant.⁴³

The doctors, *vaidyas* and *hakims* all slave for money. They do not take to the profession purely from a spirit of service. That some of them have that spirit does not contradict my statement.⁴⁴

DRESS

My narrow nationalism rebels against the hat, my secret internationalism regards the sola hat as one of the few boons from Europe. But for the tremendous national prejudice against the hat, I would undertake to become president of a league for popularizing sola hats.

Educated India has erred in taking to (in this climate) unnecessary, unhygienic, inelegant trousers and in betraying general hesitation to take up the sola hat. But I know that national likes and dislikes are not governed by reason.⁴⁵

I wear the national dress because it is the most natural and the most becoming for an Indian. I believe that our copying of the European dress is a sign of our degradation, humiliation and our weakness, and that we are committing a national sin in discarding a dress which is best suited to the Indian climate and which, for its simplicity, art and cheapness, is not to be beaten on the face of the earth and which answers hygienic requirements. Had it not been for a false pride and equally false notions of prestige, Englishmen here would long ago have adopted the Indian costume.

I avoid shoes for sacred reasons, but I find, too, that it is more natural and healthier to avoid them whenever possible.⁴⁶

DRINK

You will not be deceived by the specious argument that India must not be made sober by compulsion, and that those who wish to drink must have facilities provided for them. The State does not cater for the vices of its people. We do not regulate or license houses of ill-fame. We do not provide facilities for thieves to indulge their propensity for thieving. I hold drink to be more damnable than thieving and, perhaps, even prostitution. Is it not often the parent of both?⁴⁷

Drink is more a disease than vice. I know scores of men who would gladly leave off drink if they could. I know some who have asked that the temptation might be put away from them. In spite of the temptation having been

put away at their instance, I have known them to steal drink. . . . Diseased persons have got to be helped against themselves.⁴⁸

The drink and the drug evil is in many respects infinitely worse than the evil caused by malaria and the like; for, whilst the latter only injures the body, the former saps both body and soul.⁴⁹

Pauperization

I would rather have India reduced to a state of pauperism than have thousands of drunkards in our midst. I would rather have India without education if that is the price to be paid for making it dry.⁵⁰

Nothing but ruin stares a nation in the face that is a prey to the drink habit. History records that empires have been destroyed through that habit. We have it in India that the great community to which Shri Krishna belonged was ruined by that habit. This monstrous evil was undoubtedly one of the contributory factors in the fall of Rome.⁵¹

The drink habit destroys the soul of man and tends to turn him into a beast, incapable of distinguishing between wife, mother and sister. I have seen men who forget this distinction under the influence of liquor.⁵²

I have no doubt that the loss of revenue which drains the moral and material means of the poor drinkers will be more than balanced by the gain accruing to them from prohibition. Moreover, the military burden, in defence of which the argument for the maintenance of the excise revenue has so far been used, cannot hold water in the New India, where that burden will no longer exist. The excise revenue must, therefore, be sacrificed without delay and without hesitation. No thought of the loss of this revenue should interfere with the progress of this much-needed reform. . . .

The positive side of prohibition must run side by side with the negative. The positive consists in providing the drinker with counter-attractions giving him health and innocent amusement.⁵³

EXPERIMENTS

I can rise only by experimenting upon myself and others. I believe in the absolute oneness of God, and therefore, also of humanity. What though we have many bodies? We have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source. I cannot therefore detach myself from the wickedest soul (nor may I be denied identity with the most virtuous.) Whether, therefore, I will or no, I must involve in my experiments the whole of my kind. Nor can I do without experiment. Life is but an endless series of experiments.⁵⁴

FLAG

A flag is a necessity for all nations. Millions have died for it. It is no doubt a kind of idolatry which it would be a sin to destroy. For a flag represents an ideal. The unfurling of the Union Jack evokes in the English breast sentiments whose strength it is difficult to measure. The Stars and Stripes mean a world to the Americans. The Stars and the Crescent will call forth the best bravery in Islam.

It will be necessary for us Indians—Hindus, Mahomedans, Christians, Jews, Parsis and all others to whom India is their home—to recognize a common flag to live and to die for.⁵⁵

FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is the quality of the brave, not of the cowardly. When one of the Pandava brothers was accidentally injured while living in disguise in the home of King Virata, the brothers not only hid what had happened, but for fear that harm might come to the host if a drop of blood touched the ground, they prevented it from doing so by means of a golden bowl. It is this type of forbearance and courage which I wish every Indian to develop, whether he is a Hindu, Mussalman, Christian, Parsi or Sikh.⁵⁶

GOODNESS

It has been said that to one who is good, the whole world becomes good. This is true so far as the individual is

concerned. But goodness becomes dynamic only when it is practised in the face of evil. If you return good for good only, it is a bargain and carries no merit; but if you return good for evil, it becomes a redeeming force. The evil ceases before it and it goes on gathering volume and momentum like a snow-ball till it becomes irresistible.⁵⁷

GREATNESS

Solon found it difficult to pronounce on a man's happiness during his life; how much more difficult it must be to adjudge on a man's greatness? True greatness in the world is not found set upon a hill for the vulgar crowd to see. On the contrary, my seventy years' experience has taught me that the truly great are often those of whom and of whose greatness the world knows nothing during their lifetime. God alone is judge of true greatness because He knows men's hearts.⁵⁸

GURU

I believe in the Hindu theory of *guru* and its importance in spiritual realization. I think there is a great deal of truth in the doctrine that true knowledge is impossible without a *guru*. An imperfect teacher may be tolerable in mundane affairs, but not in spiritual matters. Only a perfect *gnani* deserves to be enthroned as *guru*.⁵⁹

If I had a *guru*,—and I am looking for one—I should surrender myself body and soul to him. But, in this age of unbelief, a true *guru* is hard to find. A substitute will be worse than useless, often positively harmful.

I must therefore warn all against accepting imperfect ones as *gurus*. It is better to grope in the dark and wade through a million errors to Truth than to entrust oneself to one who 'knows not that he knows not'. Has a man ever learnt swimming by tying a stone to his neck?⁶⁰

My conception of a *guru* is perhaps not of the ordinary. Nothing but perfection will satisfy me. I am in search of one who, though in the flesh, is incorruptible and unmoved by passion, free from the pairs of opposites, who is Truth and *ahimsa* incarnate and who will, therefore, fear none and be feared by none.⁶¹

Three Great Influences

Three moderns have left a deep impress on my life, and captivated me: Raychandbhai by his living contact; Tolstoy by his book, *The Kingdom of God is within You*; and Ruskin by his *Unto This Last*.⁶²

I believe that I discovered some of my deepest convictions reflected in this great book of Ruskin, and that is why it so captured me and made me transform my life. . . . The teachings of *Unto This Last* I understood to be:

1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.

2. That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.

3. That a life of labour, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the life worth living.

The first of these I knew. The second I had dimly realized. The third had never occurred to me. *Unto This Last* made it as clear as daylight for me that the second and the third were contained in the first.⁶³

My Political 'Guru'

I have called Gokhale my political *guru*. But in spiritual matters, I am sorry to say, I have not yet found any one to whom I could completely surrender myself and whose opinion I could implicitly and unquestioningly accept as I could Gokhale's in politics. Perhaps I am not yet ripe for a spiritual *guru*, because I believe that the spiritual *guru* comes to you of himself, in fact, seeks you out when you are ready for him.

But, while thus the little throne within has remained vacant, next to the late Rajachandra, Tolstoy is one of the three moderns who have exerted the deepest spiritual influence on my life, the third being Ruskin. It was forty years back, when I was passing through a severe crisis of scepticism and doubt that I came across his book *The Kingdom of God is within You*, and was deeply impressed by it. I was at that time a believer in violence. Its reading cured me of my scepticism and made me a firm believer in *ahimsa*.

What has appealed to me most in Tolstoy's life is that he practised what he preached and reckoned no cost too great in his pursuit of truth.⁶⁴

I have no disciples, being myself an aspirant after discipleship and in search of a *guru*.⁶⁵

HAPPINESS

Happiness . . . means an enlightened realization of human dignity and a craving for human liberty which prizes itself above mere selfish satisfaction of personal comforts and material wants and would readily and joyfully sacrifice these for self-preservation.⁶⁶

It resides in each man himself and in the search of perfection and truth. . . . "Are all men capable of seeking perfection?"—Yes, they have it in themselves.⁶⁷

HEALTH

It is established beyond doubt that ignorance and neglect of the laws of health and hygiene are responsible for the majority of diseases to which mankind is heir. The very high death rate among us is no doubt due largely to our gnawing poverty, but it could be mitigated if the people were properly educated about their health and hygiene.

Mens sana in corpore sano is perhaps the first law for humanity. A healthy mind in a healthy body is a self-evident truth. There is an inevitable connection between mind and body. If we were in possession of healthy minds, we would shed all violence and, naturally obeying the laws of health, we would have healthy bodies without an effort.

The fundamental laws of health and hygiene are simple and easily learnt. The difficulty is about their observance. Here are some:

Think the purest thoughts and banish all idle and impure thought.

Breathe the freshest air day and night.

Establish a balance between bodily labour and mental work.

Stand erect, sit erect, and be neat and clean in every one of your acts, and let these be an expression of your inner condition.

Eat to live for service of fellow-men. Do not live for indulging yourselves. Hence, your food must be just enough to keep your mind and body in good order. Man becomes what he eats.

Your water, food and air must be clean, and you will not be satisfied with mere personal cleanliness, but you will infect your surroundings with the same threefold cleanliness that you will desire for yourselves.⁶⁸

Surely, it does not follow from the doctrine of predestination that we may not 'worry' in the care of ourselves even if we are ill. Indifference to illness is a crime greater than that of falling ill. There is no end to the effort to do better today than yesterday. We have to 'worry' and find out why we are or have become ill. Health, not 'illth', is the law of nature. Let us investigate the law of nature and obey it, if we will not be ill or, if having fallen ill, will be restored.⁶⁹

Body and Soul

I believe that a healthy soul should inhabit a healthy body. To the extent, therefore, that the soul grows into health and freedom from passion, to that extent the body also grows into that state. This does not mean that a healthy body should be necessarily strong in flesh. A brave soul often inhabits a lean body. After a certain stage, flesh diminishes in proportion to the growth of the soul.

A perfectly healthy body may be very fleshless. A muscular body is often heir to many an ill. Even if it is apparently free from disease, it is not immune from infections, contagions and the like. A perfectly healthy body, on the contrary, is proof against all these. Incorruptible blood has the inherent virtue of resisting all infections.

Such an equipoise is, indeed, difficult of attainment. Otherwise I should have reached it, because my soul is witness to the fact that I would spare no pains to attain to this perfect state. No outward obstacle can stand between me and that state.

But it is not easy for all, at least for me, to efface past *samskaras*. But the delay has not in the least dismayed me. For I have a mental picture of that perfect state. I have even dim glimpses of it. The progress achieved fills me with hope, rather than despair. But even if I depart from this body before the hope is fulfilled, I would not think that I had failed. For I believe in re-birth as much as I believe in the existence of my present body. I, therefore, know that even a little effort is not wasted.⁷⁰

HONESTY

It is difficult but not impossible to conduct strictly honest business. The fact is that the honester a business, the more successful it is. Hence the proverb coined by businessmen: "Honesty is the best policy." . . . What is true is that honesty is incompatible with the amassing of a large fortune. "Verily, verily, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." . . . Honesty makes no impossible demands upon the resources of a businessman.⁷¹

IDEAL

The virtue of an ideal consists in its boundlessness. But although religious ideals must thus, from their very nature, remain unattainable by imperfect human beings, although by virtue of their boundlessness they may seem ever to recede farther away from us, the nearer we go to them, still they are closer to us than our very hands and feet because we are more certain of their reality and truth than even of our own physical being. This faith in one's ideals alone constitutes true life, in fact, it is man's all in all.⁷²

We may fall and stumble, but shall rise again; it should be enough if we did not run away from the battle.⁷³

IMMORTALITY

I believe in the immortality of the soul. I would like to give you the analogy of the ocean. The ocean is composed of drops of water, each drop is an entity and yet

it is part of the whole, 'the one and the many'. In the ocean of life we are all little drops.

My doctrine means that I must identify myself with life, with everything that lives, that I must share the majesty of life in the presence of God. The sum total of this life is God.⁷⁴

INDIVIDUAL

For me, justice for the individual, be he the humblest, is everything. All else comes after.⁷⁵

INSURANCE

. . . I had thought that life assurance implied fear and want of faith in God. . . . In getting my life insured I had robbed my wife and children of their self-reliance. What happened to the families of the numberless poor in the world? Why should they not be expected to take care of themselves? Why should I not count myself as one of them? What reason had I to assume that death would claim me earlier than the others? After all, the real protector [of my family] was neither I nor my brother, but God Almighty.⁷⁶

JOURNALISM

The sole aim of journalism should be service. The newspaper press is a great power, but just as an unchained torrent of water submerges whole countrysides and devastates crops, even so an uncontrolled pen serves but to destroy. If the control is from without, it proves more poisonous than want of control. It can be profitable only when exercised from within. If this line of reasoning is correct, how many of the journals in the world would stand the test? But who should be the judge? The useful and the useless must, like good and evil generally, go on together, and man must make the choice.⁷⁷

The true function of journalism is to educate the public mind, not to stock the public mind with wanted and unwanted impressions.

A journalist has, therefore, to use his discretion as to what to report and when. As it is, journalists are not

content to stick to facts alone. Journalism has become the art of 'intelligent anticipation of events'.⁷⁸

Modern Journalism

The superficiality, the one-sidedness, the inaccuracy and, often, even dishonesty that have crept into modern journalism, continuously mislead honest men who want to see nothing but justice done.⁷⁹

I have before me extracts from journals containing some gruesome things. There is communal incitement, gross misrepresentation and incitement to political violence bordering on murder. It is, of course, easy enough for the Government to launch out prosecutions or to pass repressive ordinances. These fail to serve the purpose intended except very temporarily, and in no case do they convert the writers, who often take to secret propaganda, when the open forum of the Press is denied to them.

The real remedy is healthy public opinion that will refuse to patronize poisonous journals. . . . Freedom of the Press is a precious privilege that no country can forgo. But if there is, as there should be, no legislative check save that of the mildest character, an internal check, such as I have suggested, should not be impossible and ought not to be resented.⁸⁰

Advertisements

I hold that it is wrong to conduct newspapers by the aid of . . . immoral advertisements. I do believe that, if advertisements should be taken at all, there should be a rigid censorship instituted by newspaper proprietors and editors themselves and that only healthy advertisements should be taken.

The evil of immoral advertisements is overtaking even what are known as the most respectable newspapers and magazines. That evil has to be combated by refining the conscience of the newspaper proprietors and editors. That refinement cannot come through the influence of an amateur editor like myself, but it will come when their own conscience is roused to recognition of the growing evil or when it is super-imposed upon them by a Government representing the people and caring for the people's morals.⁸¹

Newspapers and Truth

In the East, as in the West, newspapers are fast becoming the people's Bible, Koran, Zend Avesta and the Bhagvad-gita, rolled into one. All that appears in the papers is looked upon as God's truth.⁸²

I deprecate the habit of borrowing opinions from newspapers. Newspapers should be for the study of facts. They should not be allowed to kill the habit of independent thinking.⁸³

I hold it to be the duty of newspapermen to give nothing but facts to their readers.⁸⁴

Power of the Press

The Press is called the Fourth Estate. It is definitely a power; but to misuse that power is criminal. I am a journalist myself and shall appeal to fellow-journalists to realize their responsibility and to carry on their work with no idea other than that of upholding the truth.⁸⁵

Newspapers are a powerful influence. It is the duty of the editors to see that no false report or report likely to excite the public is published in their newspapers....

The editors and their assistants have to be extra careful about the news they give and the manner in which they dress it.

In a state of independence, it is practically impossible for the governments to control the Press. It is the duty of the public to keep a strict watch on the newspapers and to keep them on the right path. An enlightened public will refuse to patronize inflammatory or indecent newspapers.⁸⁶

For them [the people] the printed sheet is gospel truth. The fact throws a great responsibility on the editors and newswriters.⁸⁷

I myself never swear by newspaper reports and will warn readers of newspapers not to be easily affected by stories reported therein. Not even the best of them are free from exaggeration and embellishment.⁸⁸

JURY TRIALS

I am unconvinced of the advantages of jury trials over those by judges. . . . At the right moment juries have been found to fail even in England. When passions are roused, juries are affected by them and give perverse verdicts. Nor need we assume that they are always on the side of leniency. I have known juries finding prisoners guilty in the face of evidence and even judge's summing up to the contrary.

We must not slavishly copy all that is English. In matters where absolute impartiality, calmness and ability to sift evidence and understand human nature are required, we may not replace trained judges by untrained men brought together by chance. What we must aim at is an incorruptible, impartial and able judiciary right from the bottom.⁸⁹

LAWYERS

If we were not under the spell of lawyers and law-courts, and if there were no touts to tempt us into the quagmire of the courts and the appeal to our basest passions, we would be leading a much happier life than we do. Let those who frequent the law-courts—the best of them—bear witness to the fact that the atmosphere about them is foetid. Perjured witnesses are ranged on either side, ready to sell their very souls for money or for friendship's sake.⁹⁰

I had learnt the true practice of law. I had learnt to find out the better side of human nature and to enter men's hearts. I realized that the true function of a lawyer was to unite parties riven asunder. The lesson was so indelibly burnt into me that a large part of my time during the twenty years of my practice as a lawyer was occupied in bringing about private compromises of hundreds of cases. I lost nothing thereby—not even money, certainly not my soul.⁹¹

The Law and Truth

I was confirmed in my conviction that it was not impossible to practise law without compromising truth. Let the reader, however, remember that even truthfulness in the practice of the profession cannot cure it of the fundamental defect that vitiates it.⁹²

Throughout my career at the bar, I never once departed from the strictest truth and honesty.⁹³

... The first thing which you must always bear in mind, if you would spiritualize the practice of law, is not to make your profession subservient to the interests of your purse, as is unfortunately but too often the case at present, but to use your profession for the service of your country. There are instances of eminent lawyers in all countries who led a life of self-sacrifice, who devoted their brilliant legal talents entirely to the service of their country, although it meant almost pauperism to them....

Duty of Lawyer

... You can follow Ruskin's precept given in his book *Unto This Last*. 'Why should a lawyer charge fifteen pounds for his work,' he asks, 'whilst a carpenter, for instance, hardly gets as many shillings for his work?' The fees charged by lawyers are unconscionable everywhere.... In England, in South Africa, almost everywhere, I have found that in the practice of their profession, lawyers are consciously or unconsciously led into untruth for the sake of their clients. An eminent lawyer has gone so far as to say that it may even be the duty of a lawyer to defend a client whom he knows to be guilty. There I disagree. The duty of a lawyer is always to place before the judges, and to help them to arrive at the truth, never to prove the guilty as innocent.⁹⁴

LEADERSHIP

I believe that mere protestation of one's opinion and surrender to the mass opinion is not only not enough, but in matters of vital importance, leaders must *act* contrary to the mass opinion, if it does not commend itself to their reason.⁹⁵

I can certainly imagine a brave and believing weaver or cobbler more effectively leading our struggle than a timid and sceptical lawyer. Success depends upon bravery, sacrifice, truth, love and faith; not on legal acumen, calculation, diplomacy, hate and unbelief.⁹⁶

A leader is only first among equals. Some one must be put first, but he is and should be no stronger than the

weakest link in the chain. Having made our selection, we must follow him or the chain is broken and all is lost.⁹⁷

A leader is useless when he acts against the prompting of his own conscience, surrounded as he must be by people holding all kinds of views. He will drift like an anchorless ship if he has not the inner voice to hold him firm and guide him.⁹⁸

A leader is made by his followers. He reflects in a clearer manner the aspirations lying dormant among the masses.⁹⁹

MEANS AND ENDS

They say 'means are after all means'. I would say 'means are after all everything'. As the means are so the end. Violent means will give violent Swaraj. That would be a menace to the world and to India herself. . . . There is no wall of separation between means and end. Indeed, the Creator has given us control (and that too, very limited) over means, none over the end. Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception. Holding such a belief, I have been endeavouring to keep the country to means that are purely 'peaceful and legitimate'.¹⁰⁰

Means and ends are convertible terms in my philosophy of life.¹⁰¹

MEDICINE

I have spoken against Western medicine, which I have called the concentrated essence of black magic. My view springs out of my non-violence, for my soul rebels against vivisection. . . . Why should I, I said, have to practise cruelty on lower animals which I would never practise upon myself?

But I do not despise all medical treatment. I know that we have to learn a lot from the West about safe maternity and the care of infants. Our children are born anyhow and most of our women are ignorant of the science of bringing up children. Here we can learn a good deal from the West.

But the West attaches an exaggerated importance to prolonging man's earthly existence. Until man's last moment on earth, you go on drugging him even by injecting. That, I think, is inconsistent with the recklessness with which they will shed their lives in war.¹⁰²

MONEY

I have seen from experience that money cannot go as far as fellow-feeling, kind words and kind looks can. If a man, who is eager to get riches, gets the riches from another but without sympathy, he will give him up in the long run. On the other hand, he who has been conquered by love is ready to encounter no end of difficulties with him who has given him his love.¹⁰³

It is my certain conviction based on experience that money plays the least part in matters of spirit.¹⁰⁴

MORALITY

True morality consists not in following the beaten track, but in finding out the true path for ourselves and in fearlessly following it.¹⁰⁵

No action which is not voluntary can be called moral. So long as we act like machines, there can be no question of morality. If we want to call an action moral, it should have been done consciously and as a matter of duty.¹⁰⁶

Moral authority is never retained by any attempt to hold on to it. It comes without seeking and is retained without effort.¹⁰⁷

We must be guided in our policy by our sense of right, not by the lure of winning cheap popularity.¹⁰⁸

PARENTS

I have not yet known a worthy son for whom age has disfigured his mother. It is conceivably possible to gild pure gold, but the son is yet to be born who would embellish his parent.¹⁰⁹

PRIESTS

It is a painful fact, but it is a historical truth, that priests who should have been the real custodians of

religion have been instrumental in destroying the religion of which they have been custodians.¹¹⁰

PUBLIC FUNDS

If we do not account properly for every single pie we receive and do not make judicious use of the funds, we shall deserve to be blotted out of public life.¹¹¹

I have kept no property which I can call my own. Am I entitled to use . . . donations or a part of them for personal needs? During the whole of my career, I have never made any such use and have always advised friends to do likewise. I hold that there is no other course open to persons who enjoy public confidence and to whom the public give donations, fully believing that the money will be used more judiciously and carefully than by themselves for some public purpose. It would be a terrible thing if the trust reposed in one were abused for personal purposes. Ruinous consequences of such use can be better imagined than described. Public service must be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion.¹¹²

. . . After considerable experience with the many public institutions which I have managed, it has become my firm conviction that it is not good to run public institutions on permanent funds. A permanent fund carries in itself the seed of the moral fall of the institution. A public institution means an institution conducted with the approval, and from the funds, of the public. When such an institution ceases to have public support, it forfeits its right to exist.¹¹³

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

It is my settled conviction that no deserving institution ever dies for want of support. Institutions that have died have done so either because there was nothing in them to commend them to the public or because those in control lost faith or, which is perhaps the same thing, lost stamina. I would, therefore, urge the conductors of . . . such institutions not to give in because of the general depression. It is a time of test for worthy institutions.¹¹⁴

PUBLIC LIFE

I have repeatedly observed that no school of thought can claim a monopoly of right judgement. We are all liable to err and are often obliged to revise our judgements. In a vast country like this, there must be room for all schools of honest thought. And the least, therefore, that we owe to ourselves as to others is to try to understand the opponent's view-point and, if we cannot accept it, respect it as fully as we expect him to respect ours. It is one of the indispensable tests of a healthy public life and, therefore, fitness for Swaraj.

If we have no charity and no tolerance, we shall never settle our differences amicably and must, therefore, always submit to the arbitration of a third party, i.e., to foreign domination.¹¹⁵

I am definitely of opinion that a public worker should accept no costly gifts.¹¹⁶

PUBLIC WORKERS

There is in modern public life a tendency to ignore altogether the character of a public worker so long as he works efficiently as a unit in an administrative machinery. It is said that everybody's character is his own private concern. Though I have known this view to have been often taken, I have never been able to appreciate, much less to adopt, it. I have known the serious consequences overtaking organizations that have counted private character as a matter of no consequence.¹¹⁷

PUNCTUALITY

I have often expressed the opinion among friends that, in the matter of capacity for detachment, Englishmen are far in advance of us. No matter how important national affairs may be, they will keep their meal hours and hours of recreation. They are not unnerved in the face of dangers or impending calamity. This may be called working in the spirit of the Gita. Among the political workers in India there are very few who come up to the Englishman's standard. . . .

It would be a distinct gain to the national cause if the leaders and workers strictly keep their hours. . . . No man is expected to do more than he really can. If, at the end of the day, there is surplus work left or he cannot get through it without missing a meal or encroaching upon the hours of sleep or recreation, there is mismanagement somewhere. I have no doubt that if we cultivate the habit of punctuality and acting according to programme, the index of national efficiency will go up, our advance towards our goal will be rapid, and the workers will be healthier and longer lived.¹¹⁸

RACES

I know nothing of horse-racing. I have ever looked upon it with horror for its associations. I know that many men have been ruined on the race-course.¹¹⁹

As for gambling on the race-course, it is, so far as I am aware, an importation like many other importations from the West, and if I had my way, I would withdraw the protection of the law that gambling on the race-course enjoys even to the extent it does. . . . I have heard it argued that horse-racing is necessary for breeding good horses. There may be truth in this. Is it not possible to have horse-racing without gambling, or is gambling also an aid to the good breeding of horses?¹²⁰

It is wholly unnecessary for the sake of the love of horse flesh to have horse races and all their attendant excitement. They pander to the vices of humanity and mean a waste of good cultivable soil and good money. Who has not witnessed, as I have, the ruin of fine men caused by the gamble on the race-courses? It is time to leave alone the vices of the West and to strive to adopt the best that it has to give.¹²¹

REINCARNATIONS

I am a believer in previous births and rebirths. All our relationships are the result of the *samskaras* we carry from previous births. God's laws are inscrutable and are the subject of endless search. No one will fathom them.¹²²

RIVERS

We have more Gangas and Jamunas than the two. . . . They remind us of the sacrifices we must make for the sake of the land we are living in. They remind us of the process of purification that we must continuously go through as the rivers themselves are going through from moment to moment. . . . In the modern rush, the chief use we have for our rivers is to empty our gutters in them and to navigate our cargo vessels, and in the process make them dirtier still. We have no time . . . to stroll down to these rivers, and in silent meditation listen to the message they murmur to us.¹²³

SECRECY

All sins are committed in secrecy. The moment we realize that God witnesses even our thoughts, we shall be free.¹²⁴

I have come to regard secrecy as a sin more especially in politics. If we realized the presence of God as witness to all we say and do, we would not have anything to conceal from anybody on earth. For we would not think unclean thoughts before our Maker, much less speak them. It is uncleanness that seeks secrecy and darkness. The tendency of human nature is to hide dirt; we do not want to see or touch dirty things, we want to put them out of sight. And so must it be with our speech. I would suggest that we should avoid even thinking thoughts we would hide from the world.¹²⁵

I stand for unadulterated non-violent action and open means. I abhor secrecy.¹²⁶

No organization can protect life or religion if it did not work absolutely in the open.¹²⁷

SELF-PURIFICATION

Identification with everything that lives is impossible without self-purification; without self-purification the observance of the law of *ahimsa* must remain an empty dream; God can never be realized by one who is not pure of heart. Self-purification, therefore, must mean purification in all the walks of life. And purification being highly

infectious, purification of oneself necessarily leads to the purification of one's surroundings. But the path of purification is hard and steep. To attain perfect purity one has to become absolutely passion-free in thought, speech and action; to rise above the opposing currents of love and hatred, attachment and repulsion. I know that I have not in me as yet that triple purity, in spite of constant, ceaseless striving for it. That is why the world's praise fails to move me; indeed, it very often stings me. To conquer the subtle passions seems to be harder far than the physical conquest of the world by the force of arms.¹²⁸

SIMPLE LIVING

That everyone in this world should be able to maintain as high a standard of life as possible with the best possible output of labour is just as fantastic as to expect a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. . . . Luxurious living . . . is an impossible proposition for any society as a whole. And when there is no limit to luxury, where shall we stop? All the scriptures of the world have taught the exact opposite. 'Plain living and high thinking' is the ideal that has been placed before us. The vast majority recognize its truth, but are unable to get there because of human frailty.

It is, however, perfectly possible to envisage such an existence. . . . Man falls from the pursuit of the ideal of plain living and high thinking the moment we want to multiply his daily wants. History gives ample proof of this.¹²⁹

Simplicity is the essence of universality.¹³⁰

Human personality cannot be sustained in any other way [except by simplification of life]. I stand by what is implied in the phrase *Unto This Last*. That book marked the turning point in my life. We must do even unto this last as we would have the world do by us.¹³¹

SINS AND SINNERS

I do not seek redemption from the consequences of my sin; I seek to be redeemed from sin itself or rather from

the very thought of sin. Until I have attained that end, I shall be content to be restless.¹³²

The orthodox conception is redemption in the life to come. What I want to tell you is that redemption . . . is promised us here and now, if we fulfil the necessary conditions. They are firstly self-purification, and secondly, obedience to the Law. It is vain, it is demoralizing to expect that in the life to come, God will vindicate his title as Redeemer by saving us, while we continue to carry the load of sin on our heads in this life. A businessman who lies and cheats his simple-minded, ignorant customers cannot hope to be saved.¹³³

Confession

Confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner than before.¹³⁴

A clean confession, combined with a promise never to commit the sin again, when offered before one who has the right to receive it, is the purest type of repentance.¹³⁵

A man who has broken with his past feels a different man. He will not feel it a shame to confess his past wrongs, for the simple reason that these wrongs do not touch him at all.¹³⁶

A patient can ill afford to conceal his disease. If he does so he becomes his own enemy.¹³⁷

A sinner is equal to the saint in the eye of God. Both will have equal justice, and both an equal opportunity either to go forward or to go backward. Both are His children, His creation. A saint who considers himself superior to a sinner forfeits his sainthood and becomes worse than the sinner who, unlike the proud saint, knows not what he is doing.¹³⁸

I have made the frankest admission of my many sins. But I do not carry their burden on my shoulders. If I am journeying Godward, as I feel I am, it is safe with me. For I feel the warmth of the sunshine of His presence. My austerities, fastings and prayers are, I know, of no value,

if I rely upon them for reforming me. But they have an inestimable value, if they represent, as I hope they do, the yearnings of a soul striving to lay his weary head in the lap of his Maker.¹³⁹

To err is human. By confessing we convert our mistakes into stepping stones for advance. On the contrary, a person who tries to hide his mistakes becomes a living fraud and sinks down. Man is neither brute nor God, but a creature of God striving to realize his divinity. Repentance and self-purification are the means. The moment we repent and ask God for forgiveness for our lapse, we are purged of our sin and new life begins for us. True repentance is an essential requisite of prayer.¹⁴⁰

No sin can be wiped out by mere condemnation by word of mouth.¹⁴¹

To confess an error or sin as soon as it is discovered is to purge it out.¹⁴²

SLANDER

Slander and misrepresentation have always been the lot of public men. The way to overcome the opponent is by non-resistance. . . . My advice, therefore, generally speaking, is that one should take no notice of baseless and malicious imputations, but pity the calumniator and always hope and pray for his ultimate conversion. . . .

It is enough if one is true to one's own self; one can then safely let the 'turbid streams of rumour flow'.¹⁴³

SMOKING

Tobacco has simply worked havoc among mankind. Once caught in its tangle, it is rare to find anyone get out again. . . . Tolstoy has called it the worst of all intoxicants. . . .

In India people use tobacco for smoking, snuffing and also for chewing. . . . Lovers of (or seekers after) health, if they are slaves to any of these evil habits, will resolutely get out of the slavery. Several people are addicted to one, two or all the three of these habits. They do not

appear loathsome to them. But if we think over it calmly, there is nothing becoming about blowing off smoke or keeping the mouth stuffed with tobacco and *pan* practically the whole day long or keep on opening the snuffbox and take snuff every now and then. All the three are most dirty habits.¹⁴⁴

I have a horror of smoking as I have of wines. Smoking I consider to be a vice. It deadens one's conscience and is often worse than drink in that it acts imperceptibly. It is a habit which is difficult to get rid of when once it seizes hold of a person. It is an expensive vice. It fouls the breath, discolours the teeth and sometimes even causes cancer. It is an unclean habit.¹⁴⁵

Smoking is in a way a greater curse than drink, inasmuch as the victim does not realize its evil in time. It is not regarded as a sign of barbarism, it is even acclaimed by civilized people. I can only say, let those who can give it up and set the example.¹⁴⁶

SOCIAL REFORM

I have long believed that social reform is a tougher business than political reform. The atmosphere is ready for the latter, people are interested in it, and there is an impression abroad that it is possible without self-purification. On the other hand, people have little interest in social reform, the result of agitation does not appear to be striking, and there is little room for congratulations and addresses. The social reformers will have, therefore, to plod on for some time, hold themselves in peace, and be satisfied with apparently small results.¹⁴⁷

In my opinion, money is the last thing that a reformer needs in his campaign. It comes to him unsolicited in exact proportion to his strict needs. I have always distrusted reformers who have pleaded want of financial aid as an excuse for their ill-success.

Where there is zeal, adequate knowledge and faith in oneself, financial assistance has always come.¹⁴⁸

Work of social reform or self-purification . . . is a hundred times dearer to me than what is called purely political work.¹⁴⁹

SPIRITUALISM

I never receive communications from the spirits of the dead. I have no evidence warranting a disbelief in the possibility of such communications. But I do strongly disapprove of the practice of holding or attempting to hold such communications. They are often deceptive and are products of the imagination.

The practice is harmful both to the medium and the spirits, assuming the possibility of such communications. It attracts and ties to the earth the spirit so invoked whereas its efforts should be to detach itself from the earth, and rise higher. A spirit is not necessarily purer because it is disembodied. It takes with it most of the frailties to which it was liable when on earth. Information or advice, therefore, given by it need not be true or sound.

That the spirit likes communications with those on earth is no matter for pleasure. On the contrary, it should be weaned from such unlawful attachment. So much for the harm done to the spirits.

As for the medium, it is a matter of positive knowledge with me that all those within my experience have been deranged or weak-brained and disabled for practical work whilst they were holding, or thought they were holding, such communications. I can recall no friend of mine who, having held such communications, had benefited in any way.¹⁵⁰

SUFFRAGE

. . . I am wedded to adult suffrage. . . . Adult suffrage is necessary for more reasons than one, and one of the decisive reasons to me is that it enables me to satisfy all the reasonable aspirations, not only of the Mussalmans, but also of the so-called untouchables, of Christians, of labourers and all kinds of classes. I cannot possibly bear the idea that a man who has got character but no wealth or literacy should have no vote, or that a man who works honestly by the sweat of his brow day in and day out should not have the vote for the crime of being a poor man.¹⁵¹

SUPERSTITION

Superstitions and undesirable things go as soon as we begin to live the correct life. I concern myself not with belief but with asking to do the right thing. As soon as they do it, their belief rights itself.¹⁵²

I am no indiscriminate superstitious worshipper of all that goes under the name of 'ancient'. I never hesitated to demolish all that is evil or immoral, no matter how ancient it may be, but with that reservation, I must confess to you that I am an adorer of ancient institutions and it hurts me to think that people in their mad rush for everything modern despise all their ancient traditions and ignore them in their lives.¹⁵³

I believe I have no superstition in me. Truth is not truth merely because it is ancient. Nor is it necessarily to be regarded with suspicion because it is ancient. There are some fundamentals of life which may not be lightly given up because they are difficult of enforcement in one's life.¹⁵⁴

THOUGHT-POWER

Let every aspirant after a pure life take from me that an impure thought is often as powerful in undermining the body as an impure act.¹⁵⁵

Man often becomes what he believes himself to be. If I keep on saying to myself that I cannot do a certain thing, it is possible that I may end by really becoming incapable of doing it. On the contrary, if I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning.¹⁵⁶

What you think you become. Thought is never complete unless it finds expression in action and action limits your thought. It is only when there is a perfect accord between the two that there is full, natural life.¹⁵⁷

YOUTH

My hope lies in the youth of the country. Such of them as are prey to . . . vice are not vicious by nature.

They are helplessly and thoughtlessly drawn to it. They must realize the harm that it has done them and society. They must understand too that nothing but a rigorously disciplined life will save them and the country from utter ruin.¹⁵⁸

I have been watching, not without considerable anxiety, the craze for fashion which has now seized the young men belonging to the higher classes. Little do they know how by being slaves to this hypnotic dazzle from the West, they are isolating themselves from their poorest countrymen who can never adopt those fashions. I cannot help thinking that it would be a great national catastrophe, a great national tragedy . . . to barter away . . . simplicity for this tinsel splendour.¹⁵⁹

SOURCES
SOURCE REFERENCES
CHRONOLOGY
GLOSSARY
INDEX

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14. *A*, p. 371
15. *YI*, 3-9-1926, p. 336
16. *YI*, 16-10-1930, p. 2
17. *YI*, 12-3-1931, p. 32
18. *YI*, 7-5-1925, p. 163
19. *H*, 9-7-1938, p. 176
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21. *ICS*, p. 245
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24. *YI*, 3-4-1924, p. 114
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2. MY MAHATMASHIP

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54. *YI*, 13-7-1921, p. 224
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60. *H*, 8-10-1938, p. 285
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62. *YI*, 13-11-1924, p. 378
63. *H*, 15-4-1939, p. 86
64. *YI*, 2-3-1922, p. 135
65. *MGI*, p. 241
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67. *YI*, 26-3-1925, p. 112
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80. *H*, 11-5-1935, p. 98
81. *YI*, 18-8-1921, p. 238
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3. I KNOW THE PATH

84. *YI*, 17-6-1926, p. 215
85. *YI*, 17-11-1921, p. 368
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87. *YI*, 4-12-1924, p. 398
88. *H*, 18-2-1933, p. 4
89. *H*, 14-5-1938, p. 110
90. *H*, 20-10-1940, p. 330
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93. *YI*, 9-4-1924, p. 126
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4. MY MISSION

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137. *YI*, 20-11-1924, p. 382
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6. MY FASTS

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7. MY INCONSISTENCIES

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- 13. *H*, 2-6-1946, p. 167
- 14. *YI*, 20-8-1925, pp. 285-6
- 15. *A*, p. xv
- 16. *ibid*, p. xvi
- 17. *EF*, p. 71
- 18. *H*, 25-5-1935, p. 115
- 19. *H*, 15-4-1939, p. 87
- 20. *H*, 7-4-1946, p. 70
- 21. *YI*, 21-4-1927, p. 128
- 22. *YI*, 11-8-1927, p. 250
- 23. *YI*, 3-1-1929, p. 6
- 24. *ibid*

25. *H*, 10-11-1946, p. 389
26. *H*, 22-6-1935, p. 145
27. *H*, 28-7-1946, p. 243
28. *H*, 25-8-1946, p. 284
29. *H*, 22-9-1946, p. 322
30. *H*, 21-12-1947, p. 473

10. TRUTH IS GOD

31. *YI*, 11-10-1928, pp. 340-1
32. *YI*, 23-2-1922, p. 112
33. *YI*, 9-10-1924, p. 329
34. *A*, p. 206
35. *H*, 14-5-1938, p. 109
36. *YI*, 25-5-1921, pp. 161-2
37. *H*, 8-10-1938, p. 285
38. *YI*, 5-3-1925, p. 81
39. *SW*, p. 1069.
40. *YI*, 31-12-1931, pp. 427-8
41. *H*, 25-5-1935, p. 115
42. *H*, 14-11-1936, p. 314
43. *YI*, 6-8-1925, p. 275
44. *YI*, 3-12-1925, p. 422
45. *YI*, 4-8-1927, pp. 247-8
46. *H*, 29-8-1936, p. 226
47. *H*, 11-3-1939, p. 44
48. *YI*, 3-9-1931, p. 247
49. *YI*, 19-11-1931, p. 361
50. *H*, 1-6-1935, p. 123
51. *H*, 10-12-1938, p. 373
52. *H*, 24-12-1938, p. 395
53. *YI*, 17-11-1921, p. 368
54. *A*, p. xiv
55. *ibid*, p. xvi
56. *H*, 13-6-1936, pp. 140-1

11. TRUTH AND BEAUTY

57. *YI*, 13-11-1924, p. 377
58. *ibid*
59. *ibid*
60. *YI*, 20-11-1924, p. 386

61. *ibid*
62. *H*, 14-11-1936, p. 315
63. *YI*, 27-5-1926, p. 196
64. *YI*, 14-3-1929, p. 86
65. *YI*, 11-8-1921, p. 253
66. *A*, p. 228
67. *AG*, pp. 65-66
68. *H*, 19-2-1938, p. 10
69. *YI*, 13-11-1924, p. 377
70. *ibid*
71. *ibid*
72. *H*, 13-11-1924, p. 378
73. *H*, 7-4-1946, p. 67

III. FEARLESSNESS

12. THE GOSPEL OF FEARLESSNESS

1. *YI*, 13-10-1921, p. 323
2. *YI*, 2-9-1926, p. 308
3. *YI*, 11-9-1930, pp. 1-2
4. *ibid*, p. 2
5. *ibid*
6. *SW*, p. 130
7. *H*, 2-6-1946, p. 160
8. *H*, 3-11-1946, p. 388
9. *H*, 5-1-1947, p. 477
10. *YI*, 20-10-1921, p. 335
11. *SW*, p. 303
12. *YI*, 2-4-1931, p. 54
13. *ibid*, p. 58
14. *H*, 15-10-1938, p. 291
15. *H*, 26-10-1947, p. 382

IV. FAITH

13. THE GOSPEL OF FAITH

1. *YI*, 24-9-1925, p. 331
2. *YI*, 14-4-1927, p. 120
3. *H*, 26-1-1934, p. 8
4. *YI*, 14-10-1926, p. 359
5. *ibid*

6. *YI*, 26-9-1929, p. 316
7. *H*, 6-3-1937, p. 26
8. *YI*, 12-5-1920, p. 2
9. *MKG*, p. 7
10. *YI*, 11-8-1920, p. 4
11. *YI*, 1-6-1921, p. 171
12. *YI*, 23-2-1922, p. 123
13. *SW*, pp. 377-8
14. *YI*, 27-11-1924, p. 391
15. *H*, 1-3-1935, p. 24
16. *H*, 17-11-1946, p. 397
17. *H*, 9-3-1934, p. 29
18. *H*, 12-9-1936, p. 247
19. *H*, 29-3-1935, p. 51
20. *H*, 23-12-1939, p. 387
21. *HS*, p. 49
22. *ibid*, p. 50
23. *YI*, 31-7-1924, p. 254
24. *YI*, 25-9-1924, p. 318
25. *YI*, 22-9-1927, p. 319
26. *YI*, 22-12-1927, p. 425
27. *YI*, 19-1-1928, p. 22
28. *H*, 2-2-1934, p. 8
29. *H*, 16-2-1934, pp. 5-6
30. *H*, 8-6-1940, p. 157
31. *YI*, 19-1-1921, p. 22
32. *YI*, 6-10-1921, p. 317
33. *YI*, 27-8-1925, p. 293
34. *YI*, 22-12-1927, p. 426
35. *ibid*
36. *H*, 22-12-1933, p. 3
37. *H*, 14-3-1936, p. 36
38. *YI*, 25-8-1927, p. 272
39. *H*, 23-3-1947, p. 76
40. *YI*, 6-12-1928, p. 406

14. THE MEANING OF GOD

41. *H*, 14-4-1946, p. 80
42. *ibid*
43. *H*, 23-3-1940, p. 55

44. *H*, 28-7-1946, p. 233
45. *H*, 3-8-1947, p. 262
46. *H*, 24-8-1947, p. 285
47. *H*, 23-11-1947, p. 432
48. *H*, 25-1-1948, p. 535
49. *H*, 16-6-1946, p. 183
50. *H*, 4-8-1946, p. 249
51. *H*, 7-4-1946, p. 70
52. *H*, 20-4-1947, p. 109
53. *H*, 3-8-1947, p. 262
54. *H*, 23-6-1946, pp. 186-7
55. *H*, 20-4-1947, p. 118
56. *H*, 9-11-1947, p. 406
57. *ibid*
58. *H*, 7-9-1935, p. 233
59. *YI*, 11-10-1928, p. 341
60. *H*, 20-2-1937, p. 9
61. *H*, 24-2-1946, p. 24
62. *H*, 28-4-1946, p. 111
63. *H*, 7-4-1946, pp. 75-76
64. *H*, 19-5-1946, p. 136
65. *H*, 10-11-1946, p. 389
66. *YI*, 6-8-1931, p. 206
67. *YI*, 14-4-1927, p. 120
68. *A*, p. 317
69. *H*, 16-2-1934, p. 4
70. *H*, 17-4-1947, p. 87
71. *H*, 2-2-1934, p. 1
72. *ibid*, p. 5
73. *H*, 8-6-1935, p. 132
74. *YI*, 24-9-1925, p. 331
75. *YI*, 21-1-1926, p. 30
76. *H*, 18-8-1946, p. 267

15. RAMANAMA

77. *H*, 18-3-1933, p. 6
78. *H*, 17-8-1934, p. 213
79. *H*, 24-3-1946, p. 56
80. *H*, 28-4-1946, p. 111
81. *H*, 2-6-1946, p. 158

82. *H*, 19-5-1946, p. 148
83. *H*, 7-4-1946, p. 69
84. *ibid*
85. *H*, 9-6-1946, p. 171
86. *H*, 1-9-1946, p. 286
87. *H*, 23-6-1946, p. 186

16. PRAYER THE FOOD OF MY SOUL

88. *YI*, 8-12-1927, p. 413
89. *YI*, 25-9-1924, p. 313
90. *H*, 20-4-1947, p. 118
91. *YI*, 24-9-1931, p. 274
92. *YI*, 4-4-1929, p. 111
93. *H*, 24-12-1938, p. 395
94. *A*, pp. 51-52
95. *YI*, 23-1-1930, p. 25
96. *H*, 28-4-1946, p. 112
97. *YI*, 20-12-1928, p. 420
98. *H*, 14-4-1946, p. 80
99. *H*, 5-5-1966, p. 113
100. *YI*, 15-12-1927, p. 424
101. *H*, 28-4-1946, p. 109
102. *YI*, 23-1-1930, p. 25
103. *ibid*
104. *H*, 28-4-1946, p. 109
105. *H*, 5-5-1946, p. 113
106. *H*, 28-4-1946, p. 111
107. *H*, 18-8-1946, p. 265
108. *ibid*, p. 267
109. *YI*, 6-8-1925, pp. 274-5
110. *A*, p. 45
111. *H*, 24-6-1933, p. 5
112. *H*, 10-12-1938, pp. 323-4
113. *H*, 20-4-1947, p. 118
114. *YI*, 22-9-1927, p. 321
115. *YI*, 20-12-1928, p. 420
116. *ibid*
117. *YI*, 23-1-1930, p. 26
118. *H*, 14-4-1946, p. 80

119. *H*, 28-4-1946, p. 109
120. *H*, 29-6-1947, p. 209
121. *ibid*, p. 215

17. MY HINDUISM IS NOT EXCLUSIVE

122. *SW*, p. 329
123. *YI*, 6-10-1921, p. 318
124. *ibid*
125. *YI*, 2-7-1926, p. 308
126. *YI*, 22-12-1927, p. 426
127. *H*, 26-12-1936, p. 365
128. *H*, 30-4-1938, p. 99
129. *YI*, 19-1-1928, p. 22
130. *H*, 24-3-1929, p. 95
131. *YI*, 25-8-1920, p. 2
132. *YI*, 6-8-1925, p. 274
133. *YI*, 13-11-1930, p. 1
134. *H*, 24-8-1934, p. 222
135. *YI*, 24-11-1927, pp. 392-3
136. *ibid*, p. 393
137. *YI*, 8-9-1920, pp. 2-3
138. *H*, 17-11-1946, p. 405
139. *H*, 20-4-1947, p. 116
140. *H*, 7-9-1947, p. 315
141. *YI*, 31-7-1924, p. 254
142. *YI*, 31-12-1931, p. 429
143. *H*, 6-3-1937, p. 25
144. *H*, 7-1-1939, p. 417
145. *MR*, Oct. 1941, pp. 406-7
146. *ibid*
147. *ibid*
148. *H*, 17-11-1946, p. 405
149. *ibid*
150. *ibid*
151. *ibid*
152. *YI*, 20-1-1927, p. 21
153. *YI*, 21-3-1929, p. 95
154. *YI*, 29-9-1921, p. 307
155. *YI*, 20-1-1927, p. 21

156. *H*, 28-10-1939, p. 317
 157. *H*, 13-7-1940, p. 207
 158. *ibid* p. 193

18. RELIGION AND POLITICS

159. *YI*, 2-3-1922, p. 131
 160. *H*, 30-3-1947, p. 85
 161. *YI*, 12-5-1920, p. 2
 162. *A*, pp. 370-1
 163. *H*, 24-12-1938, p. 393
 164. *H*, 6-10-1946, p. 341
 165. *YI*, 18-6-1925, p. 214
 166. *YI*, 1-10-1931, p. 281
 167. *H*, 2-3-1934, p. 23
 168. *H*, 10-2-1940, p. 445
 169. *H*, 17-8-1947, p. 281
 170. *YI*, 23-2-1922, p. 123
 171. *H*, 29-6-1947, p. 215

19. TEMPLES AND IDOLATRY

172. *YI*, 6-10-1921, p. 318
 173. *YI*, 28-8-1924, p. 284
 174. *YI*, 26-9-1929, p. 320
 175. *ibid*
 176. *H*, 13-3-1937, p. 39
 177. *YI*, 5-11-1925, p. 378
 178. *YI*, 4-11-1926, p. 386
 179. *H*, 11-3-1933, p. 5
 180. *H*, 18-3-1933, p. 6
 181. *H*, 29-6-1947, p. 209
 182. *H*, 4-1-1948, p. 498

20. THE CURSE OF UNTOUCHABILITY

183. *YI*, 4-5-1921, p. 144
 184. *YI*, 5-11-1931, p. 341
 185. *H*, 24-12-1938, p. 393
 186. *YI*, 25-5-1921, p. 165
 187. *YI*, 11-3-1926, p. 95
 188. *YI*, 6-1-1927, p. 2
 189. *H*, 28-9-1947, p. 349

190. *YI*, 26-11-1931, p. 372
 191. *H*, 25-3-1933, p. 3
 192. *H*, 11-2-1933, p. 3
 193. *YI*, 27-10-1927, p. 357
 194. *YI*, 4-6-1931, p. 129
 195. *H*, 25-3-1933, p. 3
 196. *MR*, October 1935, p. 413
 197. *H*, 16-11-1935, p. 316
 198. *YI*, 8-12-1920, p. 3
 199. *YI*, 5-1-1921, p. 2
 200. *YI*, 4-6-1931, p. 129
 201. *Hu*, 19-9-1945

V. NON-VIOLENCE

21. THE GOSPEL OF NON-VIOLENCE

1. *YI*, 11-8-1920, p. 3
 2. *YI*, 11-10-1928, p. 342
 3. *YI*, 20-2-1930, p. 61
 4. *H*, 24-12-1938, p. 394
 5. *H*, 28-6-1942, p. 201
 6. *H*, 11-1-1948, p. 504
 7. *H*, 5-9-1936, p. 236
 8. *H*, 2-4-1938, p. 64
 9. *H*, 27-10-1946, p. 369
 10. *H*, 18-6-1938, p. 152
 11. *H*, 12-11-1938, p. 326
 12. *H*, 28-6-1942, p. 201
 13. *H*, 29-6-1947, p. 209
 14. *YI*, 29-5-1924, p. 175
 15. *H*, 30-3-1947, p. 86
 16. *YI*, 20-10-1927, p. 352
 17. *H*, 27-4-1947, p. 126
 18. *YI*, 14-5-1919, quoted in *Communal Unity*, p. 985
 19. *H*, 7-10-1939, p. 296
 20. *YI*, 6-9-1928, pp. 300-1
 21. *YI*, 20-2-1930, p. 61
 22. *FYM*, pp. 12-3
 23. *H*, 23-6-1946, p. 199

24. *YI*, 28-5-1924, p. 178
25. *YI*, 12-8-1926, p. 285
26. *H*, 4-8-1946, pp. 248-9
27. *H*, 17-11-1946, p. 404
28. *H*, 1-6-1947, p. 175
29. *H*, 28-1-1939, p. 442
30. *H*, 6-5-1939, p. 113

22. POWER OF NON-VIOLENCE

31. *YI*, 1-8-1920, p. 3
32. *YI*, 8-10-1925, p. 346
33. *YI*, 6-5-1926, p. 164
34. *H*, 20-7-1935, pp. 180-1
35. *H*, 12-11-1938, p. 327
36. *H*, 19-11-1938, pp. 341-2
37. *ibid*, p. 343
38. *H*, 12-5-1946, p. 128
39. *H*, 7-1-1939, p. 417
40. *H*, 21-3-1939, p. 433
41. *H*, 6-5-1939, p. 113
42. *H*, 13-5-1939, p. 121
43. *H*, 1-6-1947, p. 172
44. *A*, p. 203
45. *ibid*
46. *YI*, 17-3-1927, p. 85
47. *H*, 12-11-1938, p. 327
48. *H*, 13-5-1939, p. 121
49. *H*, 16-11-1947, p. 412

23. TRAINING FOR NON-VIOLENCE

50. *H*, 14-3-1936, p. 39
51. *H*, 1-9-1940, p. 268
52. *H*, 8-9-1946, p. 296
53. *H*, 14-12-1947, p. 468

24. APPLICATION OF NON-VIOLENCE

54. *H*, 28-1-1939, pp. 441-2
55. *H*, 12-10-1935, p. 376

56. *H*, 12-11-1938, p. 328
57. *H*, 24-12-1938, p. 393
58. *H*, 28-1-1939, p. 443
59. *GCG*, pp. 42-44, pp. 170-1
60. *H*, 26-7-1942, p. 248
61. *H*, 8-9-1946, p. 296
62. *H*, 6-7-1940, pp. 185-6
63. *H*, 29-6-1947, p. 209

25. THE NON-VIOLENT SOCIETY

64. *H*, 7-1-1939, p. 417
65. *H*, 11-2-1939, p. 8
66. *H*, 13-1-1940, pp. 410-11
67. *H*, 9-3-1940, p. 31
68. *H*, 15-9-1946, p. 309
69. *H*, 15-10-1938, p. 290
70. *H*, 12-11-1938, p. 328
71. *H*, 11-2-1939, p. 8
72. *TNH*, pp. 91-93

26. THE NON-VIOLENT STATE

73. *YI*, 2-1-1930, p. 4
74. *YI*, 2-7-1931, p. 162
75. *MR*, October, 1935, p. 412
76. *H*, 25-3-1939, p. 64
77. *ibid*, p. 65
78. *H*, 30-12-1939, p. 391
79. *H*, 18-1-1942, p. 5
80. *H*, 12-5-1946, p. 128

27. VIOLENCE & TERRORISM

81. *YI*, 28-4-1920, p. 8
82. *YI*, 24-11-1921, p. 382
83. *YI*, 24-4-1930, p. 140
84. *YI*, 2-3-1922, p. 130
85. *YI*, 21-5-1925, p. 178
86. *YI*, 26-2-1931, p. 1
87. *YI*, 9-6-1920, p. 3
88. *YI*, 12-2-1925, p. 60
89. *YI*, 29-10-1931, p. 325

- 90. *YI*, 9-4-1925, p. 124
- 91. *ibid*, p. 125
- 92. *YI*, 9-4-1925, p. 126
- 93. *YI*, 30-4-1925, p. 153
- 94. *SW*, p. 323
- 95. *YI*, 16-4-1931, p. 75
- 96. *YI*, 24-12-1931, p. 408
- 97. *H*, 25-1-1942, p. 15

28. BETWEEN COWARDICE AND VIOLENCE

- 98. *YI*, 4-8-1920, p. 5
- 99. *YI*, 11-8-1920, p. 3
- 100. *YI*, 15-12-1921, p. 419
- 101. *H*, 28-9-1934, p. 259
- 102. *YI*, 20-10-1921, p. 335
- 103. *YI*, 29-5-1924, p. 176
- 104. *YI*, 16-6-1927, p. 196
- 105. *H*, 17-8-1935, p. 211
- 106. *TI*, 8-5-1941
- 107. *H*, 24-11-1946, p. 410
- 108. *YI*, 11-10-1928, p. 342
- 109. *YI*, 21-1-1930, p. 27
- 110. *H*, 20-7-1935, pp. 180-1
- 111. *ibid*, p. 181
- 112. *H*, 27-10-1946, pp. 369-70

29. RESISTANCE TO AGGRES- SION

- 113. *H*, 15-10-1938, p. 290
- 114. *H*, 15-4-1939, p. 90
- 115. *H*, 30-3-1947, pp. 85-86
- 116. *H*, 1-6-1947, p. 174
- 117. *H*, 7-12-1947, p. 453
- 118. *H*, 21-4-1946, p. 95
- 119. *H*, 17-5-1946, p. 140
- 120. *H*, 9-6-1946, p. 172
- 121. *ibid*, p. 174
- 122. *H*, 11-1-1948, p. 504
- 123. *YI*, 29-5-1924, p. 176
- 124. *H*, 21-10-1939, p. 309

- 125. *H*, 9-12-1939, p. 371
- 126. *H*, 18-8-1940, p. 250
- 127. *H*, 17-11-1946, p. 402
- 128. *YI*, 20-11-1924, p. 382
- 129. *YI*, 2-7-1931, p. 161
- 130. *H*, 15-10-1938, pp. 290-1
- 131. *H*, 22-10-1938, p. 298
- 132. *H*, 18-8-1946, p. 265
- 133. *H*, 21-4-1946, p. 94
- 134. *H*, 16-11-1947, p. 413

30. THE CHOICE BEFORE INDIA

- 135. *YI*, 11-8-1920, p. 3
- 136. *YI*, 20-5-1926, p. 154
- 137. *YI*, 7-2-1929, p. 46
- 138. *YI*, 22-8-1929, pp. 276-7
- 139. *ICS*, p. 209
- 140. *YI*, 12-3-1931, p. 31
- 141. *H*, 14-4-1946, p. 90
- 142. *H*, 21-4-1946, p. 95
- 143. *H*, 27-7-1947, p. 253
- 144. *H*, 31-8-1947, p. 302
- 145. *H*, 14-12-1947, p. 471

31. INDIA AND THE NON- VIOLENT WAY

- 146. *H*, 29-6-1947, pp. 209-10
- 147. *H*, 20-7-1947, p. 243
- 148. *H*, 27-7-1947, p. 251
- 149. *H*, 31-8-1947, p. 302
- 150. *H*, 1-2-1948, p. 6
- 151. *YI*, 16-5-1929, p. 159
- 152. *H*, 1-9-1940, p. 265
- 153. *H*, 25-1-1942, p. 15
- 154. *H*, 5-5-1946, p. 124
- 155. *H*, 2-11-1947, p. 395

32. INDIA AND THE VIOLENT WAY

- 156. *YI*, 11-8-1920, p. 4
- 157. *YI*, 6-4-1921, p. 108

158. *YI*, 9-5-1929, p. 148
159. *H*, 21-6-1942, p. 197
160. *H*, 21-4-1946, p. 95
161. *H*, 5-5-1946, p. 116
162. *H*, 30-6-1946, pp. 206-7
163. *H*, 8-6-1947, p. 177
164. *ibid*, p. 181
165. *H*, 7-12-1947, p. 453
166. *H*, 18-1-1848, p. 513

VI. SATYAGRAHA

33. THE GOSPEL OF SATYAGRAHA

1. *HS*, p. 82
2. *YI*, 10-11-1921, p. 362
3. *SW*, p. 165
4. *YI*, 12-5-1920, p. 3
5. *YI*, 24-3-1920, p. 4
6. *YI*, 15-12-1921, p. 419
7. *YI*, 5-1-1922, p. 5
8. *A*, p. 347
9. *H*, 18-3-1939, p. 53
10. *SSA*, p. xiv
11. *RCPS*
12. *YI*, 11-8-1920, p. 3
13. *YI*, 10-3-1920, p. 3
14. *YI*, 26-2-1925, p. 73
15. *YI*, 19-3-1925, p. 95
16. *YI*, 4-6-1925, p. 189
17. *H*, 15-4-1933, p. 8
18. *H*, 7-4-1946, p. 74
19. *H*, 24-9-1938, p. 266
20. *H*, 18-8-1940, pp. 253-4
21. *YI*, 19-2-1925, p. 61
22. *YI*, 12-3-1931, p. 30
23. *YI*, 19-3-1931, p. 41
24. *YI*, 5-11-1931, p. 341
25. *SSA*, p. 159
26. *SW*, p. 465
27. *YI*, 20-10-1927, p. 353

28. *YI*, 19-3-1931, p. 40
29. *H*, 15-9-1946, p. 312
30. *YI*, 30-4-1931, p. 93
31. *H*, 11-3-1939, p. 44
32. *H*, 25-3-1939, p. 64
33. *H*, 15-4-1939, p. 86
34. *BC*, 9-8-1942
35. *YI*, 16-4-1931, p. 77
36. *H*, 25-3-1939, p. 64
37. *A*, p. 345
38. *ibid*, p. 346
39. *H*, 7-4-1946, p. 73
40. *H*, 14-7-1946, p. 220
41. *H*, 8-4-1939, p. 80

34. THE POWER OF SATYAGRAHA

42. *SL NO. 14*, 4-5-1919
43. *YI*, 19-2-1925, p. 61
44. *YI*, 8-10-1925, p. 345
45. *YI*, 23-9-1926, p. 332
46. *S*, p. 319
47. *YI*, 18-4-1929, p. 126
48. *SSA*, p. xiv
49. *YI*, 12-2-1925, p. 60
50. *H*, 8-9-1940, p. 277
51. *H*, 21-7-1946, p. 227
52. *YI*, 3-11-1927, p. 369
53. *YI*, 22-9-1927, p. 317
54. *H*, 31-3-1946, p. 64
55. *H*, 17-3-1946, pp. 45-46
56. *YI*, 28-4-1920, pp. 7-8
57. *YI*, 2-2-1921, p. 33
58. *SW*, p. 474
59. *ibid*, p. 476
60. *YI*, 12-12-1925, p. 60
61. *YI*, 2-4-1931, p. 58

35. NON-CO-OPERATION

62. *YI*, 1-12-1920, p. 3
63. *YI*, 1-6-1921, p. 172

64. *YI*, 25-8-1920, p. 322
65. *YI*, 4-8-1920, p. 4
66. *H*, 12-11-1938, p. 327
67. *H*, 29-4-1939, p. 101
68. *YI*, 2-6-1920, p. 3
69. *YI*, 30-6-1920, p. 3
70. *YI*, 1-6-1921, p. 173
71. *YI*, 11-2-1926, p. 59
72. *YI*, 20-4-1920, p. 97
73. *YI*, 19-1-1921, p. 19
74. *YI*, 4-6-1925, p. 193
75. *YI*, 18-6-1925, p. 213
76. *YI*, 6-8-1925, p. 272
77. *YI*, 13-8-1925, p. 277
78. *YI*, 12-9-1929, p. 300
79. *YI*, 26-11-1931, p. 369
80. *EF*, p. 84

36. FASTING AND SATYAGRAHA

81. *H*, 18-3-1939, p. 56
82. *H*, 13-10-1940, p. 322
83. *H*, 28-7-1946, p. 235
84. *H*, 18-8-1846, p. 262
85. *H*, 27-10-1946, p. 272
86. *H*, 9-9-1933, p. 5
87. *H*, 17-3-1946, p. 43
88. *H*, 21-4-1946, p. 93
89. *H*, 21-12-1947, p. 476

VII. NON-POSSESSION

37. THE GOSPEL OF NON-POSSESSION

1. *SW*, pp. 1066-7
2. *YI*, 30-4-1925, p. 149
3. *YI*, 23-2-1921, p. 59
4. *FRM*, pp. 23-6
5. *YI*, 3-7-1924, p. 221
6. *YI*, 5-2-1925, p. 48
7. *YI*, 24-6-1926, p. 226
8. *MR*, October 1935, p. 412

9. *SW*, p. 353
10. *A*, p. 168
11. *AOA*, p. 58
12. *H*, 6-3-1937, p. 27
13. *H*, 10-12-1938, p. 371
14. *H*, 24-2-1946, p. 19
15. *H*, 28-4-1946, p. 111

38. POVERTY AND RICHES

16. *YI*, 7-10-1926, p. 348
17. *SW*, pp. 353-4
18. *YI*, 28-4-1927, p. 137
19. *H*, 1-2-1942, p. 20
20. *H*, 22-2-1942, p. 49
21. *A*, p. 320
22. *YI*, 13-8-1925, p. 282
23. *YI*, 13-10-1921, p. 325
24. *ibid*
25. *H*, 11-5-1935, p. 99
26. *H*, 10-3-1946, p. 40

39. DARIDRANARAYAN

27. *YI*, 4-4-1929, p. 110
28. *YI*, 5-5-1927, p. 142
29. *YI*, 15-9-1927, p. 313
30. *YI*, 26-3-1931, p. 53
31. *YI*, 15-10-1931, p. 310
32. *H*, 11-3-1939, p. 44

VIII. LABOUR

40 THE GOSPEL OF BREAD LABOUR

1. *YI*, 13-10-1921, p. 325
2. *YI*, 11-4-1929, pp. 114-15
3. *FRM*, p. 35
4. *ibid*, pp. 35-36
5. *AOA*, pp. 62-63
6. *YI*, 26-3-1931, p. 49
7. *H*, 1-6-1935, p. 125
8. *H*, 29-6-1935, p. 156
9. *H*, 2-3-1947, p. 47

10. *FYM*, pp. 36-37
11. *H*, 29-6-1935, p. 156
12. *H*, 23-3-1947, p. 78
13. *H*, 7-9-1947, p. 316
14. *H*, 2-3-1947, p. 46
15. *YI*, 20-10-1921, p. 329
16. *YI*, 25-11-1926, p. 414
17. *YI*, 20-9-1928, p. 320
18. *H*, 29-6-1935, p. 156
19. *H*, 2-11-1935, p. 298
20. *H*, 16-5-1936, p. 111
21. *YI*, 6-10-1921, p. 314
22. *H*, 19-12-1936, p. 356
23. *H*, 11-1-1948, p. 507
24. *YI*, 15-10-1925, pp. 355-6
25. *H*, 29-6-1935, p. 156
26. *H*, 23-2-1947, p. 36
27. *H*, 18-1-1948, p. 520

41. LABOUR AND CAPITAL

28. *YI*, 20-8-1925, p. 285
29. *YI*, 7-10-1926, p. 348
30. *YI*, 26-3-1931, p. 49
31. *H*, 28-7-1940, p. 219
32. *SW*, p. 1046
33. *YI*, 4-8-1927, p. 248
34. *YI*, 14-1-1932, p. 17-18
35. *H*, 19-10-1935, p. 285
36. *H*, 3-7-1937, p. 161
37. *YI*, 17-3-1927, p. 86
38. *H*, 1-3-1935, p. 23
39. *YI*, 4-8-1927, p. 248
40. *YI*, 26-11-1931, p. 369
41. *ABP*, 3-8-1934
42. *H*, 28-9-1947, p. 350
43. *H*, 30-11-1947, p. 448

42. STRIKES : LEGITIMATE AND ILLEGITIMATE

44. *YI*, 5-5-1920, p. 6
45. *YI*, 16-2-1921, pp. 52-53

46. *H*, 11-8-1946, p. 256
47. *YI*, 18-11-1926, p. 400
48. *H*, 2-6-1946, p. 158
49. *H*, 28-7-1946, p. 237
50. *H*, 31-3-1946, p. 60
51. *YI*, 22-9-1921, p. 298
52. *H*, 7-11-1936, p. 311
53. *H*, 22-9-1946, p. 321

43. TILLERS OF THE SOIL

54. *YI*, 5-12-1929, p. 396
55. *YI*, 21-11-1929, p. 384
56. *ABP*, 3-8-1934
57. *H*, 5-12-1936, pp. 338, 339
58. *H*, 7-6-1942, p. 184
59. *BC*, 28-10-1944
60. *BC*, 12-1-1945
61. *H*, 25-8-1946, p. 281

44. CHOICE BEFORE LABOUR

62. *YI*, 11-2-1920, pp. 7-8

IX. SARVODAYA

45. THE GOSPEL OF SARVODAYA

1. *YI*, 4-12-1924, p. 398
2. *YI*, 3-9-1925, p. 304
3. *FYM*, p. 47
4. *YI*, 20-10-1921, p. 329
5. *YI*, 20-12-1928, p. 420
6. *FYM*, p. 2
7. *YI*, 4-9-1930, p. 1
8. *H*, 29-8-1936, p. 226
9. *H*, 8-5-1937, p. 99
10. *YI*, 24-9-1925, pp. 331-2
11. *YI*, 10-2-1927, pp. 43-44
12. *H*, 17-11-1946, p. 404
13. *A*, p. 371
14. *YI*, 26-12-1924, p. 424
15. *HS*, p. 71
16. *YI*, 17-7-1924, pp. 236-7

17. *H*, 6-5-1939, p. 112
18. *YI*, 8-1-1925, pp. 15-16
19. *H*, 27-5-1939, p. 143
20. *H*, 6-7-1947, p. 217

46. THE PHILOSOPHY OF YAJNA

21. *FYM*, pp. 53-56
22. *ibid*, pp. 57-60

47. THIS SATANIC CIVILI- ZATION

23. *YI*, 8-9-1920, pp. 2-3
24. *YI*, 26-1-1921, p. 27
25. *YI*, 13-10-1921, p. 325
26. *SW*, pp. 354-5
27. *HS*, pp. 36-37
28. *YI*, 21-1-1926, p. 31
29. *YI*, 17-3-1927, p. 85
30. *YI*, 7-10-1926, p. 348
31. *YI*, 8-12-1927, p. 414
32. *YI*, 17-3-1927, p. 85
33. *YI*, 11-8-1927, p. 253

48. MAN *v.* MACHINE

34. *YI*, 19-1-1921, p. 21
35. *YI*, 13-11-1924, p. 378
36. *H*, 30-11-1935, p. 329
37. *H*, 29-8-1936, p. 228
38. *YI*, 20-11-1924, p. 386
39. *HS*, p. 96
40. *YI*, 13-11-1924, p. 378
41. *H*, 22-6-1935, p. 146
42. *H*, 16-11-1934, p. 316
43. *H*, 16-5-1936, p. 111
44. *H*, 15-9-1946, p. 310
45. *YI*, 17-6-1926, p. 218
46. *YI*, 2-7-1931, p. 161
47. *H*, 2-11-1934, p. 301
48. *ibid*, pp. 301, 302

49. *YI*, 13-11-1924, p. 378
50. *YI*, 17-9-1925, p. 321
51. *H*, 14-9-1935, p. 244
52. *H*, 2-11-1934, p. 302
53. *YI*, 24-7-1924, p. 246
54. *YI*, 27-9-1925, p. 321
55. *YI*, 22-10-1931, p. 318
56. *YI*, 5-1-1925, p. 377
57. *H*, 22-6-1935, p. 146
58. *H*, 25-8-1946, p. 281
59. *H*, 17-11-1946, p. 405

49. THE CURSE OF INDUS- TRIALIZATION

60. *YI*, 6-8-1925, p. 273
61. *YI*, 12-11-1931, p. 355
62. *YI*, 12-11-1931, p. 355
63. *H*, 28-1-1939, p. 438
64. *YI*, 20-12-1928, p. 422
65. *YI*, 12-11-1931, p. 355
66. *H*, 1-9-1946, p. 285
67. *H*, 4-1-1935, p. 372
68. *H*, 28-9-1946, p. 226
69. *H*, 23-3-1947, p. 79

50. SOCIALISM

70. *H*, 2-1-1937, p. 375
71. *H*, 20-4-1940, p. 97
72. *ABP*, 3-8-1934
73. *H*, 20-2-1937, p. 12
74. *H*, 20-4-1940, p. 97
75. *H*, 4-8-1946, p. 246
76. *H*, 13-7-1947, pp. 232
77. *H*, 31-3-1946, p. 64
78. *H*, 20-4-1940, p. 97
79. *H*, 20-7-1947, p. 240
80. *MS*, p. 10
81. *ibid*, p. 12
82. *ibid*, p. 13

51. A SOCIALIST PATTERN OF SOCIETY

- 83. *H*, 27-1-1940, p. 428
- 84. *H*, 28-7-1946, p. 236
- 85. *ibid*

52. THE COMMUNIST CREED

- 86. *YI*, 11-12-1924, p. 406
- 87. *YI*, 15-11-1928, p. 381
- 88. *ABP*, 2-8-1934
- 89. *H*, 13-2-1937, p. 6
- 90. *H*, 13-3-1937, p. 40
- 91. *H*, 8-6-1940, p. 159
- 92. *H*, 17-2-1946, p. 10
- 93. *H*, 4-8-1946, p. 246

X. TRUSTEESHIP

53. THE GOSPEL OF TRUSTEESHIP

- 1. *CP*, pp. 20-21
- 2. *ibid*, p. 21
- 3. *YI*, 26-3-1931, p. 49
- 4. *YI*, 26-11-1931, p. 369
- 5. *H*, 3-12-1938, p. 358
- 6. *H*, 3-6-1939, p. 145
- 7. *H*, 16-12-1939, p. 376
- 8. *MR*, October 1935, p. 412
- 9. *H*, 8-3-1942, p. 67
- 10. *H*, 12-4-1942, p. 116
- 11. *H*, 31-3-1946, pp. 63-64
- 12. *H*, 4-5-1947, p. 134
- 13. *H*, 21-9-1947, p. 332
- 14. *H*, 25-10-1952, p. 301; the document, it is believed, was drafted by Prof. M. L. Dantwala.

54. NON-VIOLENT ECONOMY

- 15. *YI*, 13-10-1921, p. 325
- 16. *YI*, 27-10-1921, p. 344

- 17. *YI*, 26-10-1924, p. 421
- 18. *YI*, 15-11-1928, p. 381
- 19. *H*, 9-10-1937, p. 292
- 20. *SW*, p. 355
- 21. *H*, 1-9-1940, pp. 271-2

55. ECONOMIC EQUALITY

- 22. *YI*, 26-3-1931, p. 49
- 23. *YI*, 26-11-1931, p. 368
- 24. *H*, 15-1-1938, p. 416
- 25. *H*, 31-3-1946, p. 63
- 26. *H*, 17-11-1946, p. 404
- 27. *H*, 16-2-1947, p. 25
- 28. *H*, 1-6-1947, p. 172
- 29. *YI*, 28-7-1920, p. 5
- 30. *YI*, 23-3-1921, p. 93
- 31. *YI*, 17-3-1927, p. 86
- 32. *H*, 25-8-1940, pp. 260-1

XI. BRAHMACHARYA

56. THE GOSPEL OF BRAH- MACHARYA

- 1. *YI*, 16-9-1926, p. 324
- 2. *WGC*, p. 84
- 3. *YI*, 27-9-1928, p. 324
- 4. *A*, p. 234
- 5. *YI*, 13-10-1920, p. 3
- 6. *H*, 25-4-1936, p. 84
- 7. *H*, 22-6-1947, p. 200
- 8. *YI*, 5-6-1924, p. 186
- 9. *H*, 8-6-1947, p. 180
- 10. *A*, p. 153
- 11. *FTM*, pp. 12-13
- 12. *H*, 15-6-1947, p. 192
- 13. *FTM*, pp. 13-14
- 14. *H*, 28-4-1946, pp. 110-11
- 15. *A*, p. 234
- 16. *H*, 23-7-1938, p. 193
- 17. *H*, 4-11-1939, p. 326
- 18. *ibid*

57. THE MARRIAGE IDEAL

19. *YI*, 21-5-1931, p. 115
20. *H*, 7-9-1935, p. 234
21. *H*, 5-6-1937, p. 134
22. *H*, 22-3-1942, p. 38
23. *H*, 24-4-1937, p. 82
24. *ibid*, p. 83
25. *H*, 5-6-1937, p. 134
26. *H*, 19-10-1947, p. 374
27. *H*, 19-5-1946, p. 133
28. *H*, 7-7-1946, p. 214
29. *ibid*
30. *A*, p. 18
31. *YI*, 21-10-1926, p. 365
32. *ibid*, p. 364
33. *YI*, 2-2-1928, p. 35
34. *H*, 9-3-1940, p. 30
35. *H*, 15-9-1946, pp. 311-12
36. *H*, 16-3-1947, p. 68

58. CHILDREN

37. *YI*, 3-12-1925, p. 422
38. *A*, p. 230
39. *ibid*, p. 252
40. *YI*, 17-10-1929, p. 340
41. *YI*, 19-11-1931, p. 361

59. BIRTH-CONTROL

42. *A*, p. 148
43. *YI*, 12-3-1925, p. 88
44. *H*, 21-3-1936, p. 48
45. *H*, 28-3-1936, p. 53
46. *H*, 4-4-1936, p. 61
47. *YI*, 12-3-1925, pp. 88-89
48. *YI*, 2-4-1925, p. 118
49. *H*, 31-3-1946, p. 66
50. *H*, 1-2-1935, p. 410
51. *YI*, 2-4-1925, p. 118
52. *H*, 14-9-1935, p. 244
53. *H*, 7-9-1935, p. 234
54. *H*, 28-3-1936, p. 53

55. *H*, 17-4-1937, p. 84
56. *H*, 28-3-1936, p. 53
57. *YI*, 2-4-1925, p. 118
58. *H*, 2-5-1936, p. 92
59. *ibid*, p. 93
60. *H*, 5-5-1946, p. 118
61. *H*, 12-9-1936, p. 244
62. *YI*, 27-9-1925, p. 324
63. *ABP*, 12-1-1935
64. *AA*, November 1935
65. *H*, 2-5-1936, p. 93
66. *YI*, 19-8-1926, p. 289
67. *H*, 30-5-1936, p. 126
68. *ABP*, 12-1-1935

60 WOMAN'S STATUS AND
ROLE IN SOCIETY

69. *YI*, 15-9-1921, p. 292
70. *YI*, 21-7-1921, p. 229
71. *YI*, 8-12-1927, p. 406
72. *YI*, 10-4-1930, p. 121
73. *YI*, 7-5-1931, p. 96
74. *YI*, 14-1-1932, p. 19
75. *SW*, p. 425
76. *YI*, 16-4-1925, p. 133
77. *YI*, 17-10-1929, p. 340
78. *H*, 25-1-1936, p. 396
79. *H*, 2-5-1936, p. 93
80. *H*, 27-2-1937, p. 19
81. *H*, 2-5-1936, p. 93
82. *H*, 31-12-1938, p. 409
83. *H*, 15-9-1946, p. 312
84. *H*, 25-3-1933, p. 2
85. *H*, 12-10-1934, pp. 276-7
86. *H*, 24-2-1940, p. 13
87. *H*, 5-11-1938, p. 317
88. *H*, 24-2-1940, p. 13
89. *ibid*, pp. 13-14
90. *ibid*, p. 13
91. *H*, 5-5-1946, p. 118
92. *H*, 18-5-1947, p. 155

93. *H*, 17-10-1929, p. 340
94. *H*, 2-12-1939, p. 359
95. *SW*, p. 424
96. *H*, 5-1-1947, p. 478
97. *H*, 21-4-1946, p. 96
98. *H*, 23-3-1947, p. 80
99. *H*, 11-1-1948, p. 508
100. *YI*, 25-11-1926, p. 415
101. *YI*, 3-2-1927, p. 37
102. *H*, 23-5-1936, p. 117
103. *YI*, 21-6-1929, p. 207
104. *YI*, 5-8-1926, p. 276
105. *YI*, 8-10-1925, p. 346

61. SEX EDUCATION

106. *H*, 21-11-1936, p. 322

62. CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

107. *H*, 1-9-1940, p. 266
108. *H*, 1-3-1942, p. 60
109. *H*, 15-9-1946, p. 312
110. *H*, 5-10-1947, p. 354
111. *YI*, 28-5-1925, p. 187
112. *H*, 4-9-1937, p. 233
113. *H*, 15-9-1946, p. 310

63. THE ASHRAM VOWS

114. Address at YMCA Auditorium, Madras, February 16, 1916; *SW*, pp. 377-90

XII. FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY

64. THE GOSPEL OF FREEDOM

1. *YI*, 9-3-1922, p. 148
2. *YI*, 6-6-1929, p. 188
3. *YI*, 16-1-1930, p. 17
4. *YI*, 12-3-1931, p. 31
5. *YI*, 15-10-1931, p. 305
6. *H*, 21-12-1947, p. 477
7. *ICS*, p. 209

8. *H*, 27-5-1939, p. 144
9. *H*, 1-2-1942, p. 27
10. *H*, 7-6-1942, p. 183
11. *H*, 2-8-1942, p. 249
12. *YI*, 9-6-1920, p. 3
13. *YI*, 30-6-1920, p. 3
14. *H*, 24-2-1946, p. 18
15. *YI*, 15-12-1921, p. 418
16. *YI*, 5-1-1922, p. 5
17. *H*, 11-1-1936, p. 380
18. *H*, 10-12-1938, p. 368
19. *YI*, 26-12-1929, p. 421
20. *YI*, 10-9-1931, p. 255
21. *YI*, 1-10-1931, p. 278
22. *H*, 13-4-1947, p. 106
23. *HSt*, 1-4-1940
24. *H*, 5-5-1946, p. 116
25. *YI*, 4-7-1929, p. 218
26. *ICS*, p. 209
27. *YI*, 1-10-1931, p. 281
28. *YI*, 3-12-1931, p. 380
29. *YI*, 17-9-1925, p. 322
30. *YI*, 12-1-1928, p. 13
31. *YI*, 30-1-1930, p. 37
32. *YI*, 12-11-1931, p. 353
33. *BC*, 9-8-1942
34. *BC*, 18-4-1945

65. WHAT SWARAJ MEANS TO ME

35. *YI*, 12-6-1924, p. 195
36. *YI*, 29-1-1925, p. 41
37. *YI*, 6-8-1925, p. 276
38. *YI*, 19-3-1931, p. 38
39. *YI*, 1-5-1930, p. 149
40. *YI*, 26-3-1931, p. 46
41. *YI*, 18-6-1931, p. 147
42. *H*, 3-3-1946, p. 31
43. *YI*, 16-4-1931, p. 78
44. *H*, 28-4-1946, p. 111
45. *YI*, 17-4-1924, p. 170

46. *H*, 29-9-1940, p. 306
47. *YI*, 25-5-1921, p. 164
48. *YI*, 13-10-1921, p. 326
49. *YI*, 5-1-1922, p. 4
50. *YI*, 27-8-1925, p. 297
51. *YI*, 22-9-1920, p. 1
52. *YI*, 21-5-1925, p. 178
53. *SW*, p. 416
54. *YI*, 28-7-1921, p. 238
55. *YI*, 27-8-1925, p. 297
56. *YI*, 24-6-1926, p. 226
57. *H*, 25-3-1939, p. 64
58. *H*, 18-1-1942, p. 4
59. *H*, 7-4-1946, p. 70
60. *YI*, 26-6-1924, p. 210
61. *YI*, 23-1-1930, p. 26

66. I AM NOT ANTI-BRITISH

62. *YI*, 7-1-1920, p. 2
63. *YI*, 5-5-1920, p. 4
64. *SW*, p. 523
65. *YI*, 6-3-1930, p. 80
66. *YI*, 15-10-1931, p. 309
67. *ibid*, p. 310
68. *BC*, 9-8-1942
69. *YI*, 27-10-1920, p. 1
70. *H*, 17-2-1946, p. 12
71. *H*, 31-3-1946, p. 60
72. *ibid*, p. 61
73. *H*, 14-4-1946, p. 90
74. *YI*, 5-1-1922, p. 4
75. *H*, 14-4-1946, p. 91

67. RAMARAJYA

76. *YI*, 19-9-1929, p. 305
77. *ABP*, 2-8-1934
78. *H*, 2-1-1937, p. 374
79. *H*, 5-5-1946, p. 116
80. *ibid*

81. *H*, 1-6-1947, p. 172
82. *H*, 3-8-1947, p. 262
83. *H*, 19-10-1947, p. 378
84. *H*, 26-10-1947, p. 387
68. KASHMIR
85. *H*, 9-11-1947, p. 406
86. *H*, 12-1-1948, p. 509

69. FOREIGN SETTLEMENTS IN INDIA

87. *H*, 30-6-1946, p. 208
88. *H*, 11-8-1946, p. 260
89. *H*, 8-9-1946, p. 305
90. *H*, 30-6-1946, p. 208
91. *H*, 28-7-1946, p. 235
92. *H*, 11-8-1946, p. 260
93. *H*, 1-9-1946, p. 286
94. *H*, 8-9-1946, p. 305
95. *H*, 24-8-1947, p. 295
96. *H*, 31-8-1947, p. 298
97. *H*, 16-11-1947, p. 416

70. INDIA AND PAKISTAN

98. *H*, 6-10-1946, p. 339
99. *H*, 11-11-1939, p. 336
100. *H*, 6-4-1940, p. 76
101. *H*, 9-11-1947, p. 400
102. *H*, 13-4-1940, p. 92
103. *H*, 4-5-1940, p. 115
104. *ibid*, p. 117
105. *H*, 5-10-1947, p. 355
106. *H*, 13-7-1947, p. 236
107. *H*, 27-4-1947, p. 123
108. *H*, 14-9-1947, p. 323
109. *H*, 11-5-1947, p. 146
110. *H*, 28-9-1947, p. 352
111. *H*, 5-10-1947, p. 363
112. *H*, 28-9-1947, p. 349
113. *ibid*, p. 339
114. *H*, 5-10-1947, p. 356

71. INDIA'S MISSION

- 115. *SW*, p. 405
- 116. *YI*, 22-6-1921, p. 199
- 117. *YI*, 3-4-1924, p. 109
- 118. *YI*, 7-10-1926, p. 348
- 119. *H*, 12-10-1935, p. 276
- 120. *H*, 19-5-1946, p. 134
- 121. *YI*, 5-2-1925, p. 45
- 122. *YI*, 21-2-1929, p. 60
- 123. *YI*, 1-6-1921, p. 173
- 124. *YI*, 13-10-1921, p. 326
- 125. *YI*, 26-12-1924, p. 421
- 126. *YI*, 12-3-1925, p. 88
- 127. *YI*, 17-9-1925, p. 321
- 128. *YI*, 11-8-1927, p. 253
- 129. *H*, 17-11-1946, p. 404
- 130. *H*, 5-10-1947, p. 354
- 131. *H*, 16-11-1947, p. 411
- 132. *H*, 23-3-1947, p. 78
- 133. *H*, 5-10-1947, p. 354
- 134. *H*, 26-10-1947, p. 388

72. ESSENCE OF DEMOCRACY

- 135. *YI*, 8-12-1920, p. 3
- 136. *H*, 27-5-1939, p. 143
- 137. *YI*, 3-6-1926, p. 203
- 138. *YI*, 30-7-1931, p. 199
- 139. *H*, 14-7-1946, p. 220
- 140. *H*, 28-9-1947, p. 350
- 141. *YI*, 1-8-1920, p. 4
- 142. *BC*, 18-9-1934
- 143. *H*, 27-5-1939, p. 136
- 144. *H*, 16-11-1947, p. 409
- 145. *H*, 28-12-1947, p. 488
- 146. *A*, p. 369
- 147. *BC*, 18-9-1934
- 148. *H*, 22-4-1939, p. 99
- 149. *H*, 18-1-1948, p. 519
- 150. *ibid*, p. 518
- 151. *H*, 29-9-1946, p. 332
- 152. *H*, 14-9-1947, p. 321
- 153. *H*, 26-10-1947, p. 382
- 154. *H*, 14-12-1947, p. 471
- 155. *H*, 28-12-1947, p. 486
- 156. *YI*, 4-8-1920, p. 4
- 157. *YI*, 8-12-1921, p. 403
- 158. *YI*, 26-1-1922, p. 54
- 159. *YI*, 2-3-1922, p. 129
- 160. *YI*, 16-3-1922, p. 161
- 161. *YI*, 2-2-1921, p. 33
- 162. *YI*, 17-4-1924, p. 130
- 163. *H*, 14-8-1937, p. 209
- 164. *H*, 31-5-1942, p. 172
- 165. *YI*, 30-4-1925, p. 152
- 166. *YI*, 13-8-1925, p. 278
- 167. *ibid*, p. 279
- 168. *YI*, 2-7-1931, p. 162
- 169. *YI*, 1-12-1920, p. 4
- 170. *H*, 30-7-1931, p. 199
- 171. *H*, 13-11-1937, p. 332
- 172. *H*, 5-5-1946, p. 124
- 173. *H*, 29-9-1946, p. 334
- 174. *YI*, 7-5-1931, p. 103
- 175. *H*, 7-9-1947, p. 316
- 176. *YI*, 29-9-1921, p. 208
- 177. *H*, 16-6-1946, p. 181
- 178. *H*, 6-10-1946, p. 341
- 179. *YI*, 13-10-1921, p. 327
- 180. *YI*, 11-9-1924, p. 301
- 181. *YI*, 8-1-1925, p. 15
- 182. *YI*, 2-7-1931, p. 162
- 183. *H*, 4-9-1937, p. 233
- 184. *YI*, 1-12-1927, p. 404
- 185. *YI*, 7-5-1931, p. 99
- 186. *H*, 11-1-1936, p. 380
- 187. *H*, 6-10-1946, p. 341
- 188. *H*, 14-9-1947, p. 320
- 189. *YI*, 28-7-1920, p. 3
- 190. *YI*, 8-9-1920, p. 5
- 191. *YI*, 22-9-1920, p. 3

192. *H*, 31-3-1946, p. 66
 193. *H*, 12-1-1947, pp. 488-9
 194. *H*, 13-7-1947, p. 233
 195. *YI*, 23-2-1921, p. 59
 196. *H*, 12-11-1938, p. 328
 197. *H*, 15-4-1939, p. 90
 198. *H*, 27-5-1939, p. 143
 199. *H*, 18-5-1940, p. 129
 200. *GCG*, 1942-44, p. 143
 201. *H*, 2-3-1947, p. 44
 202. Press Statement, 17-9-1934
 203. *H*, 3-9-1938, p. 24
 204. *H*, 18-5-1940, p. 129

73. THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

205. *H*, 18-6-1938, p. 149
 206. *H*, 22-10-1938, p. 299
 207. *H*, 28-1-1939, p. 444
 208. *H*, 29-7-1939, p. 218
 209. *H*, 6-10-1946, p. 338
 210. *H*, 18-1-1942, p. 4
 211. *H*, 6-10-1946, p. 338
 212. *H*, 1-6-1947, p. 176
 213. *ibid*, p. 175
 214. *H*, 1-2-1948, p. 4
 215. *H*, 15-2-1948, p. 32

74. POPULAR MINISTRIES

216. *H*, 7-8-1937, p. 204
 217. *H*, 23-4-1938, p. 88
 218. *H*, 16-7-1938, p. 184
 219. *H*, 17-7-1937, p. 180
 220. *H*, 23-4-1938, p. 88
 221. *H*, 3-9-1938, p. 242
 222. *H*, 29-9-1946, p. 333
 223. *H*, 21-9-1947, p. 325
 224. *H*, 16-11-1947, p. 409
 225. *H*, 14-12-1947, p. 467
 226. *H*, 4-1-1948, p. 495

227. *H*, 17-2-1946, p. 13
 228. *H*, 8-9-1946, p. 293

75. INDIA OF MY DREAMS

229. *YI*, 6-10-1920, p. 4
 230. *YI*, 19-11-1925, p. 400
 231. *H*, 8-6-1947, p. 177
 232. *ibid*, p. 181
 233. *H*, 7-12-1947, p. 453
 234. *H*, 18-1-1948, p. 526

76. BACK TO THE VILLAGE

235. *H*, 4-4-1936, p. 63
 236. *YI*, 17-4-1924, p. 130
 237. *YI*, 30-4-1931, p. 94
 238. *H*, 4-4-1936, pp. 63-64
 239. *H*, 28-1-1939, p. 439
 240. *SW*, p. 323
 241. *H*, 9-10-1937, p. 293
 242. *H*, 23-6-1946, p. 198
 243. *H*, 28-7-1946, p. 236
 244. *H*, 3-11-1946, p. 381
 245. *YI*, 11-9-1924, p. 300
 246. *H*, 1-3-1935, p. 21
 247. *H*, 16-5-1936, p. 112
 248. *H*, 11-4-1936, p. 68
 249. *H*, 4-8-1946, pp. 251, 252
 250. *H*, 25-8-1946, p. 282

77. ALL-ROUND VILLAGE SERVICE

251. *H*, 27-4-1947, p. 122
 252. *H*, 16-5-1936, pp. 111-12
 253. *H*, 20-2-1937, p. 16
 254. *H*, 17-3-1946, p. 42
 255. *H*, 28-4-1946, p. 104
 256. *H*, 10-11-1946, p. 394
 257. *H*, 26-10-1934, p. 292
 258. *H*, 29-8-1936, p. 226
 259. *H*, 4-11-1939, p. 331
 260. *H*, 20-1-1940, p. 423

261. *H*, 15-2-1935, p. 1
 262. *H*, 22-6-1935, p. 146
 263. *H*, 10-3-1946, p. 34

78. PANCHAYAT RAJ

264. *H*, 4-8-1940, p. 240
 265. *H*, 18-1-1922, p. 4
 266. *H*, 28-7-1946, p. 236
 267. *H*, 4-8-1940, p. 235
 268. *H*, 30-7-1938, p. 200
 269. *H*, 26-7-1942, p. 238
 270. *H*, 1-6-1947, p. 172
 271. *H*, 15-6-1947, p. 193
 272. *H*, 7-12-1947, p. 458
 273. *H*, 21-12-1947, p. 473
 274. *H*, 4-1-1948, p. 500
 275. *H*, 18-1-1948, p. 517

79. EDUCATION

276. *H*, 10-3-1946, p. 38
 277. *H*, 1-9-1946, p. 286
 278. *H*, 8-9-1946, p. 306
 279. *H*, 19-1-1947, p. 494
 280. *H*, 2-2-1947, p. 3
 281. *H*, 2-3-1947, p. 46
 282. *YI*, 1-9-1921, p. 277
 283. *H*, 8-3-1935, p. 28
 284. *H*, 8-5-1937, p. 104
 285. *ibid*
 286. *H*, 31-7-1937, p. 197
 287. *H*, 5-5-1946, p. 120
 288. *H*, 8-9-1946, p. 306
 289. *H*, 25-8-1946, p. 283
 290. *H*, 10-11-1946, p. 394
 291. *H*, 2-3-1947, p. 48
 292. *H*, 11-5-1947, p. 147
 293. *ibid*, p. 145
 294. *H*, 9-11-1947, p. 401
 295. *H*, 21-12-1947, p. 480
 296. *H*, 25-8-1946, p. 283

297. *H*, 5-8-1950, p. 195, *Ashram Activities* (1932) Tr. V. G. Desai

298. *H*, 8-9-1946, p. 308
 299. *H*, 7-9-1947, p. 312
 300. *ibid*, p. 314
 301. *H*, 9-7-1938, pp. 177-8
 302. *MI*, p. 8
 303. *H*, 21-9-1947, p. 332
 304. *H*, 1-2-1948, p. 14
 305. *YI*, 2-2-1921, p. 34
 306. *YI*, 27-4-1921, p. 130
 307. *H*, 25-8-1946, p. 284
 308. *H*, 9-7-1938, p. 177

80. LINGUISTIC PROVINCES

309. *H*, 29-3-1942, p. 97
 310. *H*, 19-4-1942, p. 118
 311. *H*, 2-11-1947, p. 392
 312. *H*, 30-11-1947, p. 436
 313. *H*, 7-9-1947, p. 311
 314. *H*, 21-9-1947, p. 333
 315. *H*, 1-2-1948, p. 14

81. COW PROTECTION

316. *YI*, 6-10-1921, p. 36
 317. *YI*, 26-6-1924, p. 214
 318. *YI*, 1-1-1925, p. 8
 319. *H*, 15-9-1940, p. 281
 320. *YI*, 6-10-1921, p. 36
 321. *YI*, 18-5-1921, p. 156
 322. *YI*, 29-1-1925, p. 38
 323. *H*, 15-9-1946, p. 310
 324. *YI*, 29-1-1925, p. 38
 325. *YI*, 7-5-1925, p. 160
 326. *YI*, 7-7-1927, p. 219
 327. *H*, 17-2-1946, p. 11
 328. *H*, 31-8-1947, p. 300

82. CO-OPERATIVE CATTLE FARMING

329. *H*, 5-2-1942, p. 39

83. NATURE CURE

330. *A*, p. 199
 331. *H*, 26-5-1946, p. 153
 332. *ibid*
 333. *H*, 2-6-1946, p. 165
 334. *ibid*
 335. *H*, 1-9-1946, pp. 285-6
 336. *H*, 15-9-1946, p. 311
 337. *H*, 11-8-1946, p. 259
 338. *ibid*, p. 260
 339. *H*, 1-9-1946, p. 286
 340. *H*, 15-6-1947, pp. 184-5

84. CORPORATE SANITATION

341. *H*, 11-2-1933, p. 8
 342. *YI*, 26-11-1925, p. 416
 343. *H*, 18-2-1939, p. 22
 344. *H*, 7-4-1946, p. 69
 345. *CP*, p. 15

85. COMMUNAL HARMONY

346. *YI*, 11-5 1921, p. 148
 347. *YI*, 25-9-1924, p. 314
 348. *YI*, 13-8-1921, p. 215
 349. *H*, 30-4-1938, p. 99
 350. *YI*, 25-2-1920, p. 3
 351. *YI*, 11-5-1921, p. 148
 352. *YI*, 20-10-1921, p. 333
 353. *H*, 17-11-1946, p. 402
 354. *H*, 15-9-1940, p. 284
 355. *H*, 14-7-1946, p. 219
 356. *H*, 17-11-1946, p. 408
 357. *YI*, 29-8-1924, p. 181
 358. *H*, 7-4-1946, p. 74
 359. *H*, 5-1-1947, p. 478
 360. *YI*, 7-5-1919
 361. *YI*, 29-5-1924, p. 180
 362. *YI*, 25-9-1924, p. 313
 363. *H*, 4-1-1948, p. 497
 364. *WGC*, p. 131

365. *H*, 28-9-1947, p. 349
 366. *YI*, 30-12-1926, p. 458
 367. *YI*, 21-3-1929, p. 95
 368. *H*, 22-8-1940, p. 294
 369. *YI*, 11-5-1921, p. 148
 370. *YI*, 6-1-1927, p. 1
 371. *YI*, 29-9-1921, p. 307
 372. *YI*, 29-5-1924, p. 176
 373. *ibid* p. 182
 374. *H*, 24-5-1942, p. 166
 375. *YI*, 25-2-1920, p. 3
 376. *YI*, 5-6-1924, p. 188
 377. *YI*, 18-9-1924, p. 312
 378. *ibid*, p. 311
 379. *YI*, 29-1-1925, p. 38
 380. *H*, 1-2-1942, p. 27
 381. *YI*, 29-5-1924, p. 182
 382. *H*, 27-7-1947, p. 250
 383. *YI*, 11-5 1921, p. 148
 384. *H*, 3-11-1946, p. 383
 385. *YI*, 26-1-1922, p. 62
 386. *H*, 31-8-1947, p. 297
 387. *H*, 7-9-1947, p. 310
 388. *H*, 31-8-1947, p. 298
 389. *H*, 26-10-1947, p. 383
 390. *ibid*, p. 387
 391. *H*, 14-9-1947, p. 323
 392. *H*, 25-1-1940, p. 536

XIII. SWADESHI86. THE GOSPEL OF THE
CHARKHA

1. *YI*, 20-5-1926, p. 187
 2. *H*, 13-10-1946, p. 345
 3. *YI*, 21-5-1925, pp. 176, 177
 4. *YI*, 8-12-1921, p. 406
 5. *YI*, 17-9-1925, p. 321
 6. *YI*, 2-2-1928, p. 34
 7. *H*, 17-11-1946, p. 404
 8. *YI*, 21-7-1921, pp. 228-9

9. *YI*, 8-1-1925, p. 18
10. *H*, 27-4-1947, p. 122
11. *H*, 3-8-1947, p. 266
12. *H*, 18-8-1946, p. 263
13. *H*, 31-3-1946, p. 58
14. *YI*, 28-5-1925, p. 182
15. *H*, 8-5-1937, p. 99
16. *H*, 14-4-1946, p. 88
17. *H*, 31-3-1946, p. 59
18. *H*, 28-4-1946, p. 104
19. *H*, 22-9-1946, p. 320
20. *CP*, p. 12
21. *YI*, 21-7-1920, p. 4
22. *YI*, 8-12-1921, p. 406
23. *H*, 19-2-1938, p. 11
24. *H*, 13-4-1940, p. 85
25. *H*, 17-3-1946, p. 42
26. *H*, 21-7-1946, p. 231
27. *H*, 20-10-1946, pp. 363-4
28. *YI*, 16-2-1921, pp. 50-51
29. *YI*, 24-2-1927, p. 58
30. *YI*, 4-8-1927, p. 248

87. MEANING OF SWADESHI

31. *SW*, pp. 336-44
32. *YI*, 12-3-1925, p. 88
33. *FYM*, pp. 62-63
34. *H*, 23-7-1947, p. 79
35. *SW*, p. 344
36. *YI*, 17-6-1926, p. 218
37. *FYM*, p. 66

XIV. BROTHERHOOD

88. THE GOSPEL OF LOVE

1. *HS*, pp. 77-79
2. *YI*, 5-5-1920, p. 7
3. *YI*, 12-11-1931, p. 355
4. *SSA*, p. 188
5. *YI*, 1-10-1931, p. 286
6. *H*, 26-9-1936, p. 260
7. *H*, 3-7-1937, p. 165

8. *SSA*, p. 360
 9. *YI*, 9-7-1925, p. 24
 10. *YI*, 8-12-1927, p. 407
 11. *YI*, 12-3-1925, p. 91
 12. *YI*, 11-8-1927, p. 253
 13. *H*, 15-12-1933, p. 3
 14. *H*, 25-5-1947, p. 165
 15. *A*, p. 204
 16. *YI*, 27-6-1929, p. 214
 17. *H*, 30-5-1936, p. 126
 18. *YI*, 1-1-1925, p. 8
 19. *YI*, 23-9-1926, p. 334
 20. *YI*, 12-1-1928, p. 11
 21. *YI*, 2-4-1931, p. 59
 22. *YI*, 4-8-1920, p. 5
 23. *Sp*, 6-3-1942
 24. *H*, 3-3-1946, p. 28
 25. *YI*, 19-11-1931, p. 361
 26. *A*, p. 326
 27. *ibid*, p. 331
 28. *YI*, 2-4-1931, p. 54
 29. *YI*, 19-11-1931, p. 361
 30. *H*, 12-1-1934, p. 8
 31. *BC*, 9-9-1942
 32. *YI*, 10-3-1920, p. 5
 33. *H*, 26-1-1934, p. 8
- #### 89. ALL LIFE IS ONE
34. *YI*, 8-7-1926, p. 244
 35. *YI*, 21-10-1926, p. 364
 36. *YI*, 4-10-1928, p. 331
 37. *YI*, 1-11-1928, p. 361
 38. *YI*, 17-12-1925, p. 440
 39. *H*, 5-5-1946, p. 121
 40. *YI*, 18-11-1926, p. 396
 41. *YI*, 18-5-1921, p. 156
 42. *A*, p. 172
 43. *YI*, 14-4-1927, p. 121
 44. *YI*, 17-7-1927, p. 222
 45. *H*, 9-1-1937, p. 382
 46. *H*, 9-6-1946, p. 172

47. *H*, 5-5-1946, p. 123

48. *H*, 7-7-1946, p. 213

90. NO CULTURAL ISOLATION

FOR ME

49. *YI*, 1-6-1921, p. 170

50. *YI*, 1-9-1921, p. 277

51. *YI*, 17-11-1920, p. 6

52. *YI*, 30-4-1931, p. 88

53. *H*, 9-5-1936, pp. 100-1

54. *H*, 2-11-1947, p. 392

55. *YI*, 5-7-1928, p. 224

56. *YI*, 30-4-1931, p. 38

57. *H*, 25-5-1947, p. 166

58. *H*, 2-11-1947, p. 392

59. *H*, 24-12-1938, p. 404

60. *H*, 20-4-1947, p. 109

61. *H*, 11-5-1947, p. 148

62. *H*, 26-5-1946, p. 154

63. *H*, 27-10-1946, p. 375

64. *H*, 13-7-1947, p. 235

65. *H*, 16-11-1947, pp. 412-13

91. NATIONALISM *v.* INTER-

NATIONALISM

66. *GIV*, p. 171

67. *YI*, 16-4-1931, p. 79

68. *YI*, 16-3-1921, p. 81

69. *YI*, 18-6-1925, p. 211

70. *YI*, 17-9-1925, p. 320

71. *ibid*, p. 322

72. *YI*, 4-4-1929, p. 107

73. *H*, 17-11-1933, pp. 5-6

74. *YI*, 17-7-1924, p. 236

75. *YI*, 26-12-1924, p. 425

76. *YI*, 21-3-1929, p. 93

77. *YI*, 25-4-1929, p. 135

78. *H*, 31-3-1946, p. 59

79. *H*, 14-12-1947, p. 465

80. *ER*, p. 55

81. *ibid*, p. 57

82. *YI*, 4-12-1924, p. 398

83. *H*, 23-3-1947, p. 78

92. RACIALISM

84. *YI*, 27-1-1927, p. 31

85. *YI*, 20-2-1920, p. 61

86. *H*, 24-3-1946, p. 52

87. *ibid*

88. *H*, 30-6-1946, p. 204

89. *H*, 19-5-1946, p. 134

90. *ibid*, p. 206

91. *H*, 2-6-1946, p. 157

92. *H*, 30-6-1946, p. 204

93. *H*, 26-10-1947, p. 385

93. WAR AND PEACE

94. *YI*, 13-9-1928, p. 308

95. *ibid*

96. *YI*, 10-1-1929, p. 10

97. *YI*, 13-9-1928, p. 308

98. *YI*, 30-1-1930, p. 37

99. *YI*, 31-12-1931, p. 426

100. *A*, p. 258

101. *YI*, 7-2-1929, p. 46

102. *YI*, 9-5-1929, p. 148

103. *YI*, 31-12-1931, p. 427

104. *H*, 11-2-1939, p. 8

105. *H*, 15-2-1942, p. 40

106. *H*, 24-2-1946, p. 20

94. NUCLEAR WAR

107. *H*, 10-2-1946, p. 8

108. *H*, 10-3-1946, p. 36

109. *H*, 7-7-1946, p. 212

110. *H*, 23-7-1946, p. 197

111. *H*, 29-9-1946, p. 335

112. *H*, 10-11-1946, p. 389

113. *H*, 20-4-1947, pp. 116-17

114. *H*, 1-6-1947, p. 172

95. THE WAY TO PEACE

115. *YI*, 8-10-1925, p. 345
116. *YI*, 19-11-1925, p. 397
117. *ibid*
118. *YI*, 31-12-1931, p. 427
119. *H*, 12-11-1938, p. 328
120. *H*, 10-12-1938, p. 372
121. *H*, 24-12-1938, p. 394
122. *H*, 25-8-1940, p. 261
123. *YI*, 23-6-1919, p. 50
124. *ibid*, p. 51
125. Message to *Cosmopolitan*, New York, quoted in *H*, 16-5-1936, p. 109; also, *H*, 18-6-1938, pp. 153-4
126. *H*, 24-12-1938, p. 395
127. *BC*, 9-8-1942
128. *YI*, 15-12-1927, p. 421
129. *H*, 3-12-1938, p. 358
130. *BC*, 18-4-1945
131. *H*, 30-3-1947, p. 86
132. *H*, 20-7-1947, p. 243
133. *H*, 15-4-1939, p. 90
134. *H*, 15-3-1942, p. 73

96. THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

135. *NWWP*, pp. 49-51
136. *GCG*, 1942-44, p. 143

XV. OBITER DICTA

1. *SSA*, p. 186
2. *YI*, 12-3-1930, p. 95
3. *H*, 15-1-1938, p. 416
4. *H*, 20-4-1947, p. 117
5. *ibid*, p. 120
6. *H*, 30-11-1947, p. 437
7. *H*, 25-1-1948, p. 529
8. *H*, 31-7-1937, p. 197
9. *H*, 8-3-1942, p. 67
10. *H*, 1-2-1942, p. 27

11. *H*, 28-7-1946, p. 233
12. *H*, 20-4-1947, p. 109
13. *H*, 7-4-1946, pp. 71-72
14. *ibid*, p. 72
15. *H*, 28-4-1946, p. 111
16. *H*, 29-9-1946, p. 336
17. *YI*, 7-10-1946, p. 347
18. *A*, p. 237
19. *H*, 5-8-1933, p. 4
20. *YI*, 6-10-1921, p. 318
21. *A*, p. 180
22. *YI*, 7-10-1926, p. 347
23. *ICS*, pp. 402-3
24. *KH*, pp. 14-16
25. *A*, p. 200
26. *YI*, 18-7-1929, p. 236
27. *YI*, 8-8-1929, p. 261
28. *YI*, 15-8-1929, p. 265
29. *H*, 20-2-1949, pp. 430-1
30. *YI*, 6-9-1928, pp. 300-1
31. *H*, 15-9-1940, p. 285
32. *YI*, 25-6-1925, p. 220
33. *YI*, 3-6-1926, p. 203
34. *YI*, 24-6-1926, p. 226
35. *YI*, 19-5-1927, p. 160
36. *H*, 18-8-1946, p. 264
37. *H*, 11-1-1948, p. 507
38. *H*, 31-3-1946, p. 61
39. *HS*, p. 59
40. *YI*, 11-6-1925, p. 205
41. *YI*, 29-9-1927, p. 327
42. *YI*, 8-8-1929, p. 261
43. *H*, 10-2-1946, p. 8
44. *H*, 2-6-1946, p. 158
45. *YI*, 6-6-1929, p. 192
46. *SW*, pp. 393-4
47. *YI*, 8-6-1921, p. 181
48. *YI*, 6-7-1921, p. 240
49. *YI*, 3-3-1927, p. 68
50. *YI*, 15-9-1927, p. 306

51. *YI*, 11-4-1929, p. 115
52. *H*, 9-3-1934, p. 30
53. *H*, 15-9-1946, p. 313
54. *YI*, 25-9-1924, p. 313
55. *YI*, 13-4-1921, p. 116
56. *H*, 30-3-1947, p. 86
57. *H*, 2-6-1946, p. 166
58. *H*, 10-12-1938, p. 377
59. *A*, pp. 64-65
60. *YI*, 3-12-1925, p. 422
61. *YI*, 17-6-1926, p. 215
62. *A*, p. 65
63. *ibid*, pp. 220-1
64. *YI*, 20-9-1928, p. 319
65. *H*, 19-12-1936, p. 362
66. *YI*, 5-3-1931, p. 1
67. *ICS*, p. 274
68. *CP*, pp. 18-9
69. *H*, 28-7-1946, p. 233
70. *YI*, 5-6-1924, p. 187
71. *H*, 28-7-1946, p. 233
72. *YI*, 22-11-1928, p. 391
73. *N*, 7-9-1919
74. *ICS*, p. 245
75. *YI*, 17-9-1919, p. 149-50
76. *A*, p. 193
77. *ibid*, p. 211
78. *H*, 29-9-1946, p. 334
79. *YI*, 12-5-1920, p. 4
80. *YI*, 28-5-1931, p. 121
81. *YI*, 25-3-1926, p. 114
82. *H*, 28-4-1946, p. 101
83. *H*, 26-5-1946, p. 154
84. *H*, 9-2-1947, p. 19
85. *H*, 27-4-1947, p. 128
86. *H*, 19-10-1947, p. 378
87. *H*, 2-11-1947, p. 391
88. *H*, 30-11-1947, p. 447
89. *YI*, 27-8-1931, p. 240
90. *YI*, 6-10-1920, pp. 2-3
91. *A*, p. 97
92. *ibid*, p. 269
93. *YI*, 22-12-1927, p. 421
94. *ibid*, pp. 427-8
95. *YI*, 14-7-1920, p. 4
96. *YI*, 25-8-1921, p. 266
97. *YI*, 8-12-1921, p. 402
98. *YI*, 23-2-1922, p. 112
99. *H*, 2-2-1947, p. 3
100. *YI*, 17-7-1924, pp. 236-7
101. *YI*, 26-12-1924, p. 3
102. *H*, 3-7-1937, p. 165
103. *SSA*, p. 222
104. *H*, 26-12-1936, p. 368
105. *ER*, p. 36
106. *EF*, p. 43
107. *YI*, 29-1-1925, p. 40
108. *H*, 28-7-1946, p. 233
109. *H*, 3-8-1947, p. 260
110. *YI*, 20-10-1927, p. 353
111. *YI*, 6-7-1921, p. 209
112. *H*, 24-2-1946, p. 23
113. *A*, p. 144
114. *YI*, 15-10-1925, p. 351
115. *YI*, 17-4-1924, p. 130
116. *A*, p. 161
117. *H*, 7-11-1936, p. 308
118. *H*, 24-9-1938, p. 266
119. *YI*, 27-4-1921, p. 132
120. *H*, 4-9-1937, pp. 233-4
121. *H*, 18-1-1948, p. 515
122. *H*, 18-8-1940, p. 254
123. *YI*, 23-12-1926, p. 446
124. *YI*, 5-6-1924, p. 186
125. *YI*, 22-2-1920, p. 3
126. *H*, 10-3-1946, p. 37
127. *H*, 20-4-1947, p. 120
128. *A*, p. 371
129. *H*, 1-2-1942, p. 27
130. *H*, 7-4-1946, p. 69

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|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 131. <i>H</i> , 17-11-1946, p. 404 | 145. <i>YI</i> , 12-1-1921, p. 11 |
| 132. <i>A</i> , p. 90 | 146. <i>YI</i> , 4-2-1926, p. 46 |
| 133. <i>H</i> , 2-6-1946, p. 166 | 147. <i>YI</i> , 6-9-1928, pp. 301-2 |
| 134. <i>YI</i> , 16-2-1922, p. 102 | 148. <i>YI</i> , 14-11-1929, p. 369 |
| 135. <i>A</i> , pp. 20-21 | 149. <i>YI</i> , 6-8-1931, p. 203 |
| 136. <i>YI</i> , 6-10-1927, p. 340 | 150. <i>YI</i> , 12-9-1929, p. 302 |
| 137. <i>YI</i> , 2-2-1928, p. 37 | 151. <i>YI</i> , 8-10-1931, p. 297 |
| 138. <i>H</i> , 14-10-1933, p. 5 | 152. <i>YI</i> , 11-8-1927, p. 251 |
| 139. <i>H</i> , 18-4-1936, p. 77 | 153. <i>WGC</i> , p. 107 |
| 140. <i>H</i> , 21-4-1946, p. 94 | 154. <i>H</i> , 14-3-1936, p. 36 |
| 141. <i>H</i> , 23-6-1946, p. 200 | 155. <i>YI</i> , 25-8-1927, p. 278 |
| 142. <i>H</i> , 20-10-1946, p. 367 | 156. <i>H</i> , 1-9-1940, p. 268 |
| 143. <i>YI</i> , 6-12-1928, p. 405 | 157. <i>H</i> , 7-4-1946, p. 72 |
| 144. <i>KH</i> , pp. 39-42 | 158. <i>YI</i> , 9-7-1925, p. 239 |
| | 159. <i>YI</i> , 8-12-1927, p. 416 |

CHRONOLOGY

1869	Oct.	2	Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi born of a Bania (Vaishya or trading caste) family at Porbunder, Kathiawar, the youngest of the three sons of Karamchand <i>alias</i> Kaba Gandhi, Prime Minister successively in Porbunder, Rajkot and Vankar States, and his fourth wife Putlibai.
1876			Goes to Rajkot with parents; attends primary school there till twelfth year; is betrothed to Kasturbai, daughter of Gokuldas Makanji, merchant.
1881			Enters High School at Rajkot.
1883			Marries Kasturbai.
1884-85			Takes to meat-eating in secret, but abandons habit after about a year to avoid deceiving his parents. Father dies, aged 63.
1887			Passes Matriculation examination; joins Samaldas College at Bhavnagar (Kathiawar), but gives up studies at close of first term.
1888	Sept.	4	Sails for England.
	Oct.	28	Reaches London. Lives on vegetarian diet. Takes lessons in dancing and music for a short time, thinking they are necessary parts of a gentleman's equipment.
1889			Reads books on simple living and decides to reduce expenses by half; studies religious literature; reads <i>Gita</i> for first time and is deeply impressed.

1890			Cultivates contacts with vegetarian movement; for short while conducts vegetarian club.
	June		Passes London Matric.
	Sept.		Joins Vegetarian Society.
✓ 1891	June	10	Called to the Bar.
		12	Sails for India.
	July		Reaches Bombay.
	Nov.		Applies for admission to Bombay High Court.
1892			Struggles with legal practice at Rajkot and Bombay; later settles down at former place as legal draftsman.
✓ 1893	April		Leaves for South Africa, being engaged by a Muslim firm for legal work.
	May-June		Experiences colour bar in various forms; decides to remain and fight race prejudice.
✓ 1894	Aug.	22	Founds Natal Indian Congress.
	Sept.		Enrolled as Advocate of Supreme Court of Natal, being first Indian to be so enrolled.
			Studies religious literature including the Bible, the Koran and Tolstoy's <i>The Kingdom of God is Within You</i> .
1895			Gets more committed to South African Indian cause. Issues <i>The Indian Franchise: An Appeal to Every Briton in South Africa</i> .
✓ 1896	July		Returns to India and starts agitation on behalf of South African Indians.
	Aug.	14	Publishes <i>The Green Pamphlet</i> at Rajkot.
			Tours Bombay, Madras, Poona and Calcutta educating Indians in regard to grievances of South African Indians.
	Nov.	30	Sails for South Africa with wife and children.

- 1897 Jan. 13 Mobbed on landing at Durban by crowd excited by reports of his speeches in India on conditions of indentured Indian labour in South Africa.
- 20 Declines to prosecute assailants.
- April 6 Submits long memorial to Chamberlain, Secretary of State for Colonies, regarding landing incidents, background.
- Carries on programme of petitioning local and Imperial authorities, as well as of communicating with British and Indian public men regarding discriminatory laws.
- 1898-99 Represents to Indian National Congress, Colonial and Imperial authorities, against Locations and restrictions on Indians' trading rights.
- 1899 Raises Indian Ambulance Corps in Boer War, which goes into action and is mentioned in dispatches; awarded war medal.
- 1900 Sends Dadabhai Naoroji draft resolution on South African Indian problem, for Congress session.
- 1901 Oct. 18 Sails for India.
- Dec. 14 Reaches Rajkot *via* Porbunder.
- 27 Moves resolution on South Africa at Congress.
- 1902 Jan. 28-Feb. 1 Visits Rangoon.
- Stays for a month with Gokhale at Calcutta.
- Returns to Rajkot, settles down to practise.
- July Shifts to and sets up practice at Bombay.
- Nov. Is called to South Africa to champion Indians' cause against anti-Asiatic legislation in Transvaal.

- Dec. Arrives in Durban: leads delegation to Chamberlain.
- 1903 Enrolled as Attorney of Supreme Court of Transvaal; founds Transvaal British Indian Association.
Sends weekly statements regarding situation to Dadabhai Naoroji.
- June *Indian Opinion* commences publication.
- 1904 Reads Ruskin's *Unto This Last*: founds Phoenix Settlement near Durban (Natal); organizes hospital during outbreak of plague in Johannesburg; writes series of articles in Gujarati on dietetics which are later translated into English and published under the title *Guide to Health*.
- 1905 Opposes Bengal Partition, supports boycott of British goods. During Gokhale-Lajpat Rai deputation to Britain, appeals to Colonial statesmen to treat India, 'an integral part of the Empire', with consideration.
Leads deputation to Lord Selborne, British High Commissioner, concerning Transvaal Indian problems.
- 1906 May 12 Supports 'home rule' for India 'in the name of justice and for good of humanity'.
27 Writes to brother, Lakshmidas, declaring disinterestedness in worldly possessions.
- June-July Raises Indian Stretcher-bearer Corps in Zulu Rebellion; takes vow of *brahmacharya* for life.
- Sept. 11 Addresses mass meeting of Indians at Johannesburg, which takes oath of passive resistance against newly promulgated Transvaal Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance.

1907	Oct. 21-Nov. 30		In England on deputation to present Indians' case to Colonial Secretary.
	Dec.	18	Returns to South Africa.
	Jan.-Feb.		Writes series of 8 articles in Gujarati on "Ethical Religion", published weekly in <i>Indian Opinion</i> and later, as a book.
	March		Asiatic Registration Act passed in Transvaal Parliament. Indians hold protest meetings.
	April		Sees Smuts at Pretoria, acquaints him with resolutions adopted at mass meetings. Pledges, in <i>Indian Opinion</i> , opposition to 'Black Act'.
	May		'Black Act' receives royal assent.
	July		Addresses mass meeting opposing 'Black Act'.
	Aug.		Writes to Smuts criticising Registration Act, suggesting amendments. Passive resistance, picketing of Permit Offices; defends passive resisters in court.
	Dec.		Smuts decides to prosecute Gandhiji.
	Jan.	8	Asks Government for suspension of Registration Act, offers voluntary registration.
1908		10	Adopts word: 'Satyagraha' in place of 'Passive Resistance'. Sentenced to 2 months' imprisonment for failure to leave Transvaal.
		21	Agrees to settlement on basis of voluntary registration, if Registration Act is repealed.
		30	Summoned to see General Smuts at Pretoria and released, on reaching a compromise.
	Feb.	10	Nearly killed by Pathans who regard the compromise, under which Indians are expected to give their finger-prints voluntarily, as a betrayal of Indian

		interests; refuses to prosecute his assailants.
March-June		Negotiates with Smuts for fulfilment of promise of repeal of Act which Smuts denies.
July		Correspondence with Smuts released; Indians in mass meeting decide to refuse thumb impressions and burn registration certificates.
Aug.		Declares use of violence 'harmful, even useless to uproot British rule' in India. Appeals to Smuts to repeal 'Black Act'. Registration certificates burnt at meetings; passive resistance resumed.
Sept.		Royal assent is given to amended Registration Act. Smuts refuses Indian terms for settlement.
Oct.	15	Arrested and sentenced to 2 months' rigorous imprisonment.
Dec.	12	Released from Volksrust Gaol. Indian National Congress adopts resolution on South Africa, criticizing the harsh, humiliating and cruel treatment of British Indians in South Africa as injurious to British Empire.
1909 Jan.	16	Arrested at Volksrust for failing to produce registration certificate; on deportation, returned and is re-arrested, but released on bail.
	20	Writes to Press calling on Indians to prepare for final phase of struggle.
Feb.	25	Arrested at Volksrust; sentenced to 3 months.
May	2	Transferred to Pretoria Central Gaol.
	24	Released.
June	21	Leaves with Haji Habib, on deputation to England to represent Indian case.
July	10	Arrives in London. With the assistance of Lord Ampthill, works ceaselessly to educate influential

British leaders, the public, and to move Imperial authorities.

Oct.	1	Writes to Tolstoy regarding Passive Resistance movement.
Nov.	9	<i>The Times</i> reports failure of Gandhi-Government negotiations on Transvaal laws.
	10	Replies to Tolstoy, sends his biography by Doke.
	13	Leaves England for South Africa. Writes <i>Hind Swaraj</i> on board "s. s. Kildonan Castle".
	30	Reaches South Africa.
Dec.	29	Congress at Lahore adopts resolution praising Indians' struggle in South Africa, urging ban on indenture.
1910 April	4	Sends Tolstoy copy of <i>Indian Home Rule</i> , seeks comment.
May	8	Tolstoy replies: question of Passive Resistance of greatest importance not only for India but for humanity.
	30	Founds Tolstoy Farm.
Dec.	4	Pays memorial tribute to Tolstoy.
1911 Jan.		Communicates with Smuts regarding amendments to Immigrants' Restriction Bill; latter assures: no colour bar taint in laws.
March	27	Interviews Smuts at Capetown.
April	22	Smuts agrees to assurances demanded by Indians in reciprocation of suspension of Passive Resistance movement.
May	3	Meets Smuts: 'Provisional Settlement' arrived on Smuts' promise of repeal of Asiatic Registration and Immigrants' Restriction Acts.
June	24	Pledges loyalty to King-Emperor on coronation.

	Dec.	8	Invites Gokhale to South Africa.
1912	March	16	Commends Gokhale's attempts for abolition of indenture system.
	Sept.	12	Phoenix Trust is set up.
	Oct.	22	Accompanies Gokhale, on tour of South Africa, Laurence Marques, Mozambique and Zanzibar.
			Gives up European dress and milk and restricts himself to diet of fresh and dried fruit.
1913	Jan.	18	Refers in <i>Indian Opinion</i> to the possibility of return home to India by mid-year.
	March	14	Indian marriages in South Africa invalidated by Searle's Supreme Court judgment.
		30	Indians in mass meeting protest against Searle judgment.
	April	12	In <i>Indian Opinion</i> draws attention to new Immigration Bill's failure to fulfil terms of Provisional Settlement of 1911. Kasturba decides to join Passive Resistance struggle.
	May	19	Warns Government of certainty of revival of movement if it fails to grant promised relief.
	June	7	Idea of return to India deferred in view of stringent application of discriminatory laws and likely resumption of satyagraha.
		28	Expresses readiness for negotiations.
	Sept.	13	Announces negotiations "proved abortive".
		15	Passive Resistance is revived.
		16	Kasturba is arrested.
	Oct.	17	Visits Newcastle; urges indentured Indians to cease work till repeal of £ 3 tax. 3000 miners strike.
		24	Proposes 'March' into Transvaal.
		28	'March' from Newcastle begins.
		30	Reaches Charlestown.

Nov.	3	Announces 'March' into Transvaal to court arrest.
	5	Telephones Smuts seeking assurance of repeal of £ 3 tax.
	6	Leads 'Great March'. Arrested at Palmford.
	7	At Volksrust, released on bail; rejoins Marchers.
	8	Arrested at Standerton; released on recognizance; 'March' continues.
	9	Arrested at Teakworth, taken to Balfour.
	10	Takes 'one meal a day' pledge till repeal of tax.
	11	Sentenced, at Dundee, to 9 months' rigorous imprisonment.
	13	Removed to Volksrust gaol.
	14	Sentenced to 3 months on fresh count at Volksrust.
Dec.	18	Released unconditionally; from time of release till settlement takes only one meal a day and puts on indentured labourer's dress.
1914 Jan.	13, 16	Interviews Smuts, submits proposals.
	22	Suspends satyagraha following agreement with Smuts. Fourteen days' penitential fast for moral lapse of inmates of Farm.
June		Indian Relief Act is passed.
July	18	Sails for England, <i>en route</i> to India.
Aug.	4	Reaches London. Raises Indian Volunteer Corps.
Oct.		Volunteer Corps on duty. Offers satyagraha over administrative interference in corps.
Dec.	19	Sails for India.
1915 Jan.	9	Reaches India. Awarded 'Kaiser-i-Hind' Gold Medal for Ambulance services.

- | | | |
|-----------------|------|--|
| May | 20 | Founds Satyagraha Ashram (later known as Sabarmati Ashram, after the name of the river) at Ahmedabad. |
| 1915-16 | | Tours India and Burma, travelling 3rd class on the railways. |
| 1917 | | Successfully agitates against indentured Indian emigration; idea of making use of spinning-wheel to produce handmade cloth on large scale takes root in his mind. |
| April | | Goes to Champaran (Bihar) to investigate conditions of labour in indigo plantations; arrested and later released; appointed by Bihar Government as member of committee set up to inquire into ryots' grievances. |
| 1918 Jan.-March | | Takes up cause of textile labourers of Ahmedabad and fasts to secure amicable settlement of dispute; initiates satyagraha in Kaira District (Bombay) to secure suspension of revenue assessment on failure of crops. |
| April | 27 | Attends Viceroy's War Conference at Delhi and addresses it in Hindustani; subsequently tours Kaira District to raise recruits for army. |
| 1919 Feb. | 28 | Signs Satyagraha Pledge to secure withdrawal of Rowlatt Bills. |
| April | 6 | Inaugurates all-India satyagraha movement; countrywide <i>hartal</i> . |
| | 8-11 | Arrested on way to Delhi for refusal to comply with order not to enter Punjab; escorted back to Bombay; outbreaks of violence in several towns. |
| | 13 | Jallianwala Bagh tragedy at Amritsar, troops firing on an unarmed crowd and killing over 400. Addresses public meeting near Sabarmati Ashram and declares three days' penitential fast. |

- 14 Confesses at Nadiad his 'Himalayan miscalculation' regarding satyagraha martial law declared in Punjab.
- 18 Suspends satyagraha.
- Sept. Assumes editorship of the Gujarati monthly, *Navajivan*, later published weekly in Hindi also.
- Oct. Assumes editorship of the English weekly, *Young India*; joins non-official committee of inquiry into official excesses in Punjab.
- Nov. 24 Presides over All-India Khilafat Conference at Delhi.
- Dec. Advises acceptance of Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms by Congress at Amritsar.
- 1920 Jan. Leads deputation to Viceroy to press on British Government not to deprive Sultan of Turkey (who was also Khalifa of Muslims) of his suzerainty over Holy Places of Islam.
- Aug. 1 Addresses letter to Viceroy surrendering Kaiser-i-Hind Medal, Zulu War Medal and Boer War Medal.
- Sept. Special session of Indian National Congress at Calcutta accepts his programme of non-co-operation to secure redress of Punjab and Khilafat wrongs.
- Nov. Founds Gujarat Vidyapeeth at Ahmedabad.
- Dec. Nagpur Congress session adopts his resolution declaring object of Congress to be attainment of Swaraj by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means.
- 1921 April Launches programme of enlisting a crore of members in Congress, raising a crore of rupees for Tilak Swaraj Fund and setting up 20 lakhs of charkhas in the country in furtherance of national constructive movement.

	Aug.		Leads campaign for complete boycott of foreign cloth and lights monster bonfire of foreign cloth in Bombay.
	Dec.		Invested with full dictatorial powers by Congress session at Ahmedabad.
1922	Feb.	1	Gives notice to Viceroy of intention to launch satyagraha campaign in Bardoli (Gujarat).
		5	Following Chauri Chaura (U.P.) tragedy, in which 21 police constables and one sub-inspector were burnt to death by a mob, fasts for five days and abandons plan of satyagraha movement.
	March	10	Arrested for sedition at Sabarmati and sentenced (March 18) to six years' imprisonment.
1924	Jan.-Feb.		Operated on for appendicitis in Sassoon Hospital, Poona (Jan. 12) and released on Feb. 5.
	April		Resumes editorship of <i>Young India</i> and <i>Navajivan</i> .
	Sept.	18	Begins 21 days' fast for Hindu-Muslim unity.
1925	Dec.		Presides over Congress session at Belgaum.
	Sept.		Founds All-India Spinners' Association.
	Nov.		Seven days' vicarious fast for misdeeds of Ashram inmates.
			Commences writing his autobiography, <i>The Story of My Experiments with Truth</i> .
1927	Nov.		Visits Ceylon.
1928	Dec.		Moves resolution at Calcutta Congress session in favour of Independence if Dominion Status is not granted by end of 1929.
1929	Dec.		At his instance Lahore Congress session declares that Swaraj in Congress creed shall mean <i>Purna Swaraj</i> (complete independence).

✓
1930 Feb.

Appointed by A.I.C.C. as Congress Dictator to launch Civil Disobedience movement.

March

2

Addresses letter to Viceroy intimating his intention to break Salt law if Congress demands are not conceded.

12

Commences march to Dandi sea-beach, where he ceremoniously picks up salt (April 6).

May

5

Arrested and imprisoned without trial; *hartal* all over India; over 100,000 are jailed before close of year.

1931 Jan.

26

Unconditionally released from prison.

Feb.-March

Has series of talks with Viceroy resulting in Irwin-Gandhi Pact.

Aug.

29

Sails for England as sole Congress delegate to Second Round Table Conference.

Sept.-Dec.

Attends sessions of Conference.

Dec.

5

Leaves England for India.

28

Lands in Bombay.

1932 Jan.

4

Arrested and imprisoned without trial.

Sept.

20

Commences 'fast unto death' in jail to secure abolition of separate electorates for Harijans in Communal Award.

26

Breaks fast on Government of India's acceptance of his demand regarding Harijans.

1933 Feb.

11

Founds the weekly paper *Harijan*, published in English and Hindi.

May

8

Commences at noon 21 days' fast for self-purification; released unconditionally at 9 p.m.

9

Announces suspension of Civil Disobedience movement for six weeks and calls on the Government to withdraw its Ordinances.

29

Breaks fast.

July	26	Disbands Satyagraha Ashram.
	30	Informs Government of Bombay of his decision to march from Ahmedabad to Ras with 33 followers to revive Civil Disobedience movement.
	31	Arrested and imprisoned without trial.
Aug.	4	Released and rearrested for breaking a restraint order.
	16	Goes on fast on being denied facilities to carry on anti-untouchability propaganda.
	23	Released unconditionally.
Nov.	7	Commences Harijan-uplift tour.
1934 Sept.	17	Announces decision to retire from politics from October 1 to engage himself in development of village industries, Harijan service and education through basic crafts.
Oct.	26	Inaugurates All-India Village Industries Association.
1936 April	30	Settles down at Sevagram, a village near Wardha in the Central Provinces, making it his headquarters.
1937 Oct.	22	Presides over Educational Conference at Wardha and outlines his scheme of education through basic crafts.
1939 March	3	Commences 'fast unto death' at Rajkot to secure Ruler's adherence to promise given to reform administration, and ends it on March 7 on Viceroy's intervention.
1940 July & Sept.		Meets Viceroy by invitation in connection with war situation.
Oct.		Sanctions individual civil disobedience; suspends <i>Harijan</i> and allied weeklies following official demand for pre-censorship of reports and writings in <i>Harijan</i> on the subject of satyagraha.

1941	Dec.	30	At his own request is relieved of his leadership of Congress by Working Committee.
✓ 1942	Jan.	18	Restarts <i>Harijan</i> and allied weeklies.
	March	27	Meets Sir Stafford Cripps in New Delhi; later declares Cripps proposals to be a 'post-dated cheque'.
	May		Appeals to British Government to quit India.
	Aug.	8	Addresses A.I.C.C. session in Bombay on implications of Quit India resolution.
		9	Arrested and interned in Aga Khan's Palace at Poona.
		15	Death of Mahadev Desai, Gandhiji's personal secretary, from heart failure, in Aga Khan's Palace
	Aug.-Dec.		Corresponds with Viceroy and Government of India regarding disturbances.
1943	Feb.	10	Commences 21 days' fast, which he breaks on March 3.
✓ 1944	Feb.	22	Kasturba Gandhi dies in Aga Khan's Palace.
	May	6	Released unconditionally.
	Sept.	9-27	Carries on talks with M. A. Jinnah regarding Pakistan.
	Oct.	2	Presentation of purse of 110 lakhs of rupees (£ 8,25,000) for Kasturba Memorial on occasion of 75th birthday.
1945	April	17	In a statement regarding the ensuing San Francisco Conference says that peace is impossible without equality and freedom of India. Also demands a just peace for Germany and Japan.
	Dec.	19	Lays foundation stone of C. F. Andrews' Memorial Hospital at Santiniketan.
	1945-46 Dec.-Jan.		Tours Bengal and Assam.
✓ 1946	Jan. & Feb.		Tours Southern India for anti-untouchability and Hindustani propaganda.

Feb.	10	Revives <i>Harijan</i> and allied group of weekly journals.
April		Participates in political talks with Cabinet Mission in Delhi.
May	5-12	In Simla; Simla Conference in session; deliberations prove infructuous.
	16	Cabinet Mission announces Plan.
	18-19	Discusses Plan with Cabinet Mission.
	26	Considers Plan best document produced by British Government under circumstances.
June	6	In Mussoorie.
	7	Returns to Delhi.
June	10	Refuses to enthuse over Allied victory as not being 'victory of truth over falsehood'.
	11	Viceroy interviews Gandhiji, moots proposal of Coalition Government at Centre.
	16	Cabinet Mission negotiations discontinued; Viceroy proposes Interim Government.
	18	Congress Working Committee decides to accept Interim Government scheme.
	20-1	Attends Working Committee meeting. Gandhiji is seen by Cripps.
	23	Advises Congress not to enter Interim Government, but only Constituent Assembly.
	24	Meets Cabinet Mission.
	28	Leaves Delhi for Poona; attempts made to derail train <i>en route</i> .
July	7	Addresses A.I.C.C. meeting at Bombay; Congress accepts Cabinet Mission Plan of May 16.
	31	Jinnah threatens sanctions of 'Direct Action'.
Aug.	12	Viceroy announces invitation to Congress to form Provisional Government.

Aug.	16-18	The 'Great Calcutta Killing'.
	24	Viceroy Wavell broadcasts Plan.
	27	Gandhiji cables warning to British Government against repetition of 'Bengal tragedy'; also writes to Wavell.
Sept.	4	Interim Government formed.
	26	Has interview with Wavell.
Oct.	9	Jinnah's 9-point demands conveyed to Congress.
	10	Noakhali Massacre.
	15	Muslim League agrees to enter Interim Government.
	28	Leaves for Calcutta. Riots break out in Bihar.
Nov.	6	Leaves for Noakhali; issues statement on 'Partial Fast'. Noakhali tour begins.
	20	Starts tour without party.
Dec.	20	Completes month-long sojourn at Srirampur.
	25	At Noakhali, says: "I am being tested through and through. . . ."
	30	Jawaharlal Nehru calls on Gandhiji, who says: "My reason wholly supports my heart."
1947 Jan.	2	Says: "All around me is utter darkness." Leaves Srirampur on walking tour.
	3-29	In Bihar, touring riot-affected areas.
	30	Leaves Patna for Delhi.
		Mountbatten, new Viceroy, arrives in Delhi.
April	1-2	Gandhiji addresses Asian Relations Conference in Delhi.
	15	Issues with Jinnah joint appeal for communal peace.
	29	In Bihar.
May	1	Congress Working Committee accepts Partition in principle.

- | | | |
|--------|----|---|
| | 5 | In interview, Gandhiji denies that communal division of India is inevitable. |
| | 24 | Leaves Bihar for Delhi. |
| | 31 | Declares peace must precede Partition, he would not be party to India's vivisection. |
| June | 2 | Viceroy's Partition plan revealed; Congress Working Committee conveys acceptance. |
| | 3 | Indian leaders broadcast on Mountbatten Plan. |
| | 6 | Gandhiji writes to Mountbatten, with Pakistan conceded, to persuade Jinnah to amicably settle all outstanding points with Congress. |
| | 12 | Addresses Congress Working Committee. |
| July | | 'Independence of India Bill' passed. |
| | 27 | Appeals to Princes to regard people's paramountcy as a privilege. |
| August | 14 | Hails following day as one of rejoicing for deliverance from British bondage; but deplores Partition. Pakistan is born. |
| Aug. | 15 | Hindu-Muslim fraternization in Calcutta. |
| | 16 | Hails 'Miracle of Calcutta'. |
| Sept. | 1 | Considers Calcutta peace nine-days' wonder, decides on fast. |
| | 2 | Is mobbed in Calcutta house; gives up idea of Noakhali visit. Peace efforts intensified. |
| | 4 | Breaks fast. |
| | 7 | Leaves Calcutta for Delhi; commences daily visits to riot-racked areas. |
| | 24 | Pakistan raiders invade Kashmir. |
| | 25 | Kashmir accedes to Indian Union. |
| | 26 | Criticises Churchill's 'holocaust in India' statement. |

Nov.	1	Indian troops enter Junagadh
	8	Junagadh accedes to India. Addresses A.I.C.C.
	11	Defends Junagadh's accession to India.
Dec.	25	Pleads for amicable settlement between India and Pakistan.
	30	India refers Kashmir dispute to U.N.
1948 Jan.	12	Decides to fast for communal peace in Delhi; Mountbatten fails to dissuade Gandhiji.
	15	Enters 'danger zone'. Hails Indian Cabi- net's decision to release Pakistan dues of Rs. 550 million. Fast continues for esta- blishment of communal peace.
	17	Doctors warn fast must be ended. Central Peace Committee formed, decides on 'Peace Pledge'.
	18	Peace Committee signs, presents 'Peace Pledge' to Gandhiji, who breaks fast.
	20	Bomb explodes at prayer meeting.
	27	Visits Mehrauli Muslim Fair.
	29	Angry refugees ask Gandhiji to retire to the Himalayas.
	30	Drafts constitution of a Congress trans- formed into Lok Sevak Sangh.
		Is assassinated on way to evening prayer.

GLOSSARY

- Advaita*: Hindu philosophy of Monism or Non-dualism
- Agari*: Zoroastrian fire-temple
- Ahimsa*: non-violence; in its positive aspect—love for all living things
- Allah*: Muslim name of God
- Amanitvam*: humility
- Aparigraha*: non-possession
- Ardhangana*: woman; the 'better half'
- Ashram*: abode of spiritual teacher; place for disciplined community living; stage of life
- Asoka*: Indian monarch of 3rd century B.C. famed for his renunciation of empire and conquest and for his rock-edicts embodying Buddhist *dharma*
- Atishudra*: One lower than the *shudra*, the fourth caste at the bottom of Hindu social hierarchy; 'untouchable'
- Atman*: soul
- Avatar*: literally, a 'descent': incarnation of a deity, especially of Vishnu in the Hindu Trinity
- Bansi*: bamboo flute as of the divine cowherd, Sri Krishna
- Bardoli*: Gujarat village, connected with the Civil Disobedience Movement
- Bhagwadgita*: (see 'The Gita')
- Bhakti*: devotion
- Bhangi*: scavenger; sweeper
- Bharat Mata*: Mother India
- Bibhishan*: brother of Ravana, in the *Ramayana*, known for his wise counsel
- Bhogabhumi*: Land of enjoyment
- Brahma*: Hindu name of God the Creator, one of the Trinity
- Brahmachari*: a celibate; one who observes Brahmacharya
- Brahmacharya*: celibacy; code of conduct involving strict observance of chastity or continence in the pursuit of learning, philosophy and God

Brahmana, Brahmin: member of the first of the four castes, whose chief duty is the study and teaching of the Vedas and the performance of sacrifices and other religious rituals

Buddha, the: founder of Buddhism, b. about 563, d. about 483 B.C.; also known as Gautama, Siddhartha, Sakyamuni, etc.

Chaitanya: Bengali religious reformer of the 15th century A.D., who is worshipped by his followers as an incarnation of Sri Krishna

Chakki: grinding wheel or mill

Chapati: thin flat cakes made of flour; unleavened bread

Charkha: Spinning-wheel

Dandi March: march undertaken by Gandhiji from March 12 to April 5, 1930, from his Sabarmati Ashram to the coastal village of Dandi, about 100 miles distant, with a view to breaking the Salt Law by picking up natural salt from the sea-shore. His arrest at Dandi was followed by a country-wide movement of Civil Disobedience famous as the Salt Satyagraha

Damayanti: Princess of Vidarbha and wife of Prince Nala of Naishadha, the constancy of whose devotion to each other forms the theme of a well-known episode in the Puranas

Daridranarayana: God in the form of the poor and the destitute

Dasharatha: King of Ayodhya, father of Rama, in the *Ramayana*

Dayanand: Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-83), founder of the Arya Samaj

Dharma: religion; law of one's being; righteousness; Hindu code of religion and morals or religious and moral duty

Dharmaja: one born from a sense of duty

Dharmayuddha: war fought for a righteous end by righteous means and methods

Dheds: a community in Gujarat traditionally treated as 'untouchable'

Dhurna: 'sit-down' strike; an early and crude form of Satyagraha

Dnyandev: boy poet-saint of Maharashtra of the 13th century A.D., author of *Dnyaneshwari*, a Marathi commentary on the Gita; also spelt as Dnyaneshwar or Jnaneshwar

Draupadi: consort of the Pandava Princes, in the *Mahabharata*

Dublas: a backward *shudra* community of Gujarat

Duryodhana: Head of the Kaurava Princes, in the *Mahabharata*

Dyer: British General who fired on an unarmed assembly in Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, on April 13, 1919, killing over 400 people

Ganga, the: sacred river Ganges of Northern India

Ganja: narcotic from the flower of Indian hemp

Ghani: village oil mill

Gita, the: The 'Song Celestial'; a Hindu scriptural work in Sanskrit verse, composed some centuries before the Christian era, in which Sri Krishna sums up the essence of Hindu religion and philosophy

Ghee: clarified butter

Gokhale: Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915), Indian politician, member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council and founder of the Servants of India Society, whom Gandhiji acknowledged as his political *guru*

Goonda: a rowdy or hooligan

Goondaism: rowdyism

Gopal: cowherd; a name of Sri Krishna

Gur: jaggery, indigenous form of sugar molasses

Guru: teacher; preceptor

Goseva: service of the cattle; cow-protection

Gram Panchayat: village tribunal or 'council of five'

Gramseva: village service

Gram sevak: person employed in village service

Hakim: practitioner of indigenous form of medicine

Hanuman: The 'Monkey-God' who serves Rama in the *Ramayana*

Hartal: strike, suspension of normal business

Hooghli: westernmost branch of the River Ganges on the banks of which Calcutta is situated

Ishopanishad: one of the major Upanishads

- Jainism:** ancient Indian religion, one of the cardinal principles of which is non-violence
- Jains:** followers of Jainism
- Janak:** philosopher-king of Videha, foster-father of Sita, in the *Ramayana*
- Kabir:** poet-saint of northern India, who lived in the 15th century A.D. and who, in his devotional songs, dwelt on the essential oneness of the Godhead and the harmony between Hinduism and Islam
- Kamaja:** one born of lust
- Karmabhumi:** land of duty
- Karmayogi:** one who has devoted his life to action in the selfless service of others
- Khaddar, khadi:** hand-spun and hand-woven cloth
- Kisan:** peasant
- Koran:** Muslim scripture
- Krishna:** divine hero and central figure of the epic, *Mahabharata*, who is worshipped by the Hindus as the 8th incarnation of God.
- Kshatriya:** member of the second (warrior) caste among Hindus
- Lila, leela:** divine play or sport; the creation is often explained by the Vaishnavas as the *leela* of God, a conception that introduces elements of spontaneity and freedom into the universe
- Lok Sevak Sangh:** Society or association for the service of the people
- Mahabharata, the:** Hindu epic having for its theme the story of the great war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, princes of the Lunar race who were cousins, rival claimants to the throne of Hastinapur, (ancient Delhi)
- Mahatma:** Great soul, title given to Gandhiji
- Mahavir:** 24th Tirthankar or Prophet of Jainism (b. about 540, d. about 468 B.C.) who is popularly regarded as its greatest promulgator, originally named Vardhamana
- Mahayajna:** the great sacrifice or ritual of propitiation
- Mantra, Mantram:** sacred or magical incantation

Manushya: man

Maya: illusion; in Hindu philosophy Maya is the divine power which has created the cosmos

Meerabai: Rajput princess of the 16th century A.D., who was a great devotee of Sri Krishna and who composed and sang innumerable songs in praise of Him which have since become popular all over India

Moksha: liberation from earthly bondage

Muni: sage; ancient seer

Nai 'Talim: literally, 'new education', name given to basic or craft education

Namaz: form of Muslim prayer, worship

Nanak: founder of Sikhism (b. 1469—d. 1538 or 1539 A.D.)

Nirvana: Salvation, Buddhist equivalent of 'moksha'

Pancha, Panchayat: the five; the communal tribunal or 'council of five'

Panchayat Raj: rule of the Panchayat

Pandavas: the five brothers, princes of the Lunar Race, who were the victors in the Mahabharata war

Pinjrapoles: institutions for looking after old and disabled cattle

Poorna Swaraj: Full self-government or complete independence

Prahlad: son of Hiranyakashipu, a mythological demon-king; Prahlad's worship of Vishnu led to persecution by his father who was ultimately slain by Narasimha, the 'Man-Lion' avatar of Vishnu

Pritam: Pritamdas, Gujarati poet of the 16th century A.D., who composed numerous devotional songs

Raj: kingdom, rule, regime

Rajachandra, Raychandbhai: Jain saint and philosopher, contemporary of Gandhiji, whom the latter acknowledged as his spiritual *guru*. He died in 1900.

Ram, Rama: hero of the epic, *Ramayana*, who is regarded by Hindus as an ideal man and king, and worshipped as the 7th incarnation of God

Ramakrishna: Bengali saint (1836-86 A.D.), who was the *guru* of Swami Vivekananda and who taught the one-

ness of the Godhead and the basic harmony of all religions. The Ramakrishna Mission is named after him

Ramanama: literally, the name of Rama; recitation of God's names

Ramanuja: Vaishnava scholar of the 12th century, who propounded *Dvaita* or dualistic philosophy

Ramarajya: literally, kingdom of Rama; an ideal system of government

Ramayana, the: Hindu epic narrating the story of the abduction of Sita, wife of Rama, prince of Ayodhya, by Ravana, demon-king of Lanka (Ceylon), and her rescue after the conquest of Lanka by the armies led by Rama and the death of Ravana at Rama's hands

Ramji Mandir: Rama's temple

Ravana: the demon-king of Lanka, whose abduction of Sita, led to his destruction at Rama's hands, in the *Ramayana*

Sadavrat: charity

Sahadharmini: wife

Samagra Gramseva: all-round village service

Samskaras: innate tendencies inherited from past life; religious customs

Sanatanist: faithful follower of ancient Vedic religion

Sannyas: abandonment of all worldly ties with a view to fixing the mind on the Supreme Being

Sannyasi: one who has taken to *sannyas*

Sarvodaya: welfare of all

Satvika: tending to truth

Satya: truth

Satyagraha: recourse to truth-force or soul-force

Satyagrahi: One who practises Satyagraha

Savitri: wife of Satyavan who, according to legend, reclaimed his life from the God of Death

Shankara: Hindu philosopher of the 8th century A.D., who was one of the foremost exponents of Non-dualism of the Vedanta school of philosophy

Shastras: the Hindu scriptures

Shloka: metrical verse or composition

Shudra: member of the fourth or menial caste among Hindus

Sita: wife of Rama

Smritis: the Codes, based on recollection of the Shastras

Sthitaprajna: literally, 'one of steadfast mind'; a soul unaffected by extremes of joy and sorrow

Sudama: the indigent boyhood friend and associate of Sri Krishna, whom the latter honours, in the *Bhagavata*

Surdas: blind Hindi poet of northern India who lived in the 16th century A.D; his poetical work, *Sursagar*, narrating the story of Krishna, is immensely popular with Hindi-speaking Hindus

Swadeshi: belonging to or made in one's own country

Swargarohan Parva: The name of the last of the eighteen sections of the epic *Mahabharata* which describes how, when Yudhishtira, the eldest of the five Pandava brothers, retired to the Himalayas, towards the close of his life, and lost his wife and four brothers one after another, Indra appeared in his chariot to take him in the flesh to his (Indra's) *Swarga*, i.e., his heaven where mortals after death enjoy the results of their good deeds on earth.

Tadgud: jaggery prepared from the juice of palmyra fruit

Tapascharya: penance

Tilaks: caste-marks on the forehead

Tukaram: poet-saint of Maharashtra who lived in the 17th century A.D. and who composed thousands of devotional songs

Tulsidas: Hindi poet of northern India who lived in the 16th century A.D. and who composed, among other works, *Ramacharitamanasa*, (lit. The Holy Pool of the Life of Rama), retelling the epic story of the exploits of Rama. This work is held in the highest veneration by all Hindi-speaking Hindus

Upanishads: ancient Hindu philosophical treatises, appended to the Vedas and regarded as equally authoritative as the Vedas

- Vaidyas*: practitioners of Ayurveda system or indigenous medicine
- Vaishyas*: members of the third (cultivator and mercantile) class among Hindus
- Valmiki*: first of Sanskrit poets and author of the Hindu epic, *Ramayana*
- Varna*: colour; one of the four divisions of Hindu society (i.e., Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra) based on hereditary occupations
- Varnashrama*: four-fold divisions of Hindu society
- Vedanta*: a system of philosophy springing from the Upanishads
- Vedas*: most ancient Hindu scriptures, composed of hymns to various deities. There are four collections of these hymns, known as *Rigveda*, *Samaveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda*
- Vidura*: the low-born but 'wise one' in the *Mahabharata* honoured by Sri Krishna
- Yajna*: ritual or religious sacrifice
- Yoga*: Hindu system of contemplation for effecting union of the human soul with the Supreme Being
- Yogi*: one who practises yoga
- Yudhishthira*: eldest of the Pandava Princes, celebrated for his right conduct
- Zamindar*: landholder
- Zend Avesta*: Zoroastrian scriptures
- Zoroaster*: founder of religious system known as Zoroastrianism. He is also known as Zarathustra or Zerdusht. The Parsis of India, who are emigrants from Persia, are followers of this prophet.

INDEX

ABDULLAH, SHEIKH, 151
 Absolute morality, 66
 Abyssinia, 454
 Abyssinians, 148
 Action, in a detached manner, 17
Advaita, 223, 439
 Advertisements, 480
 Afghanistan, 337
 Africa, 242, 419, 434
 Africans, 337, 441
 Afridis, 327
 Agiari, 106
 Agra Fort, 360
 Agriculture, 200, 265
Ahimsa, 3, 4, 5, 24, 25, 26, 37, 42, 44, 51, 68, 93, 94, 112, 116, 118, 119, 120, 123, 124, 126, 127, 133, 135, 147, 151, 157, 158, 159, 168, 169, 177, 194, 198, 202, 225, 226, 249, 259, 265, 266, 270, 271, 290, 296, 304, 305, 348, 390, 419, 423, 425, 429, 430, 442, 446, 489; farthest limit of humility, 5; its complete realization would give perfect vision of Truth, 44; largest contribution of Hinduism, 93; is a science, 123 ff.; its way, 147-8; means infinite love, meaning infinite capacity for suffering, 295; is an answer for atom bomb, 448; not a matter of diete-

tics, 468; restraint touches only the fringe of—, 468; *see* Non-violence
 Ahriman, 180
 Air Force, 156
 Allies, 16, 457
 All-India Congress Committee, 352; *see* Congress & Indian National Congress
 All-India Spinners' Association, 354
 All-India Village Industries Association, 354
 Ambulance Corps, 323
 America, 30, 153, 242, 246, 453
 Americans, 239, 317, 473
 Anarchists, 253
 Anarchy, 33, 131, 141; enlightened, 134
 Andrews, (C. F.), 325
 Anger, 35, 44, 73, 114, 119, 120, 150; controlled—is transmuted into power, 16
 Angerlessness, 16
 Animal passions, their control easy by the control of palate, 306
 Arabia, 431
 Arbitration, 211, 342, 400, 487
 Arjun, 179, 446
 Armed rising, 139
 Arms, 27
 Army, 156
 Art, 55-58; an expression of soul, 55 its productions in-

- adequate as compared with eternal symbols of beauty, 55
- Artists, 55
- Ashoka, 405
- Ashram, 12, 107, 309, 310, 425; vows, 303
- Asia, 163, 336, 419, 433, 434, 451; its message of love and truth, 450; has to release message of the Buddha, 453
- Asian countries, 433
- Asiatic Conference, 156
- Asiatics, 137, 330
- Assassin, Assassination, 140, 141, 142
- Assaults, 15
- Atheism, Atheists, 49, 51
- Atishudra, 107, 111
- Atomic Bomb, 123, 125, 146, 148, 150, 451; represents physical & material force, 447; proves futility of all violence, 447; deadens finest feelings that have sustained mankind, 448; temporarily destroyed soul of Japan, 448; will not be destroyed by counter bombs, 449; its employment for wholesale destruction is most diabolical use of science, 449
- Attachment, 60
- Austerities, represent yearnings of a longing soul, 9
- Austria, 454
- Autocracy, 38
- Autocratic rule, 323
- BABYLON**, 241
- Badshah Khan, 117
- Balanced diet, 81, 394
- Banias, 325
- Bankruptcy, 22, 146
- Bannerman, Henry Campbell, 76
- Basic Education, believes in establishing equilibrium between body, mind & spirit, 380; consistent with the environment of India, 380; *see* Education & *Nai Talim*
- Basic Unity of Religions, 66
- Beauty, is in Truth, 56, 57
- Beggary, 194
- Bengali, 384
- Bhagavadgita, 179, 225, *see* Gita *Bhakti*, 225
- Bhangi, 201, 396, 397, 405
- Bharat Mata, 292
- Bibhishan, 180
- Bible, the, 67, 68, 92, 98, 105, 180, 198, 202, 242; its central teaching of non-violence, 450; its prophesy, 451
- Birth-Control, 284, 289
- Blacklegs, 215, 216
- Black races will rise against white oppressors, 440
- Body, to be used as temple of God, 470
- Body-labour, as pre-condition for vote, 202; at the core of village occupations, 265; *see* Bread Labour
- Boer War, 76, 323, 442
- Bolshevik, 254; ideal, 254
- Bolshevism, 254
- Bombay, 178, 303, 308
- Bondaref, T. M., 198
- Bose, Jagdish Chandra, 382, 411
- Bose, Subhas, 151
- Brahma, 202, 273

Brahmachari, 274, 277

Brahmacharya, 272, 278, 419; means control in thought, word and deed, 273; its full & proper meaning is search of Brahma, 273; incomplete without control upon thought, 274; a mental condition, 275; true—will shun false restraints, 275; its simultaneous control in all directions will be scientific & possible of success, 276; drew Gandhiji to woman as the mother of man, 277

Brahmana, 107, 109, 325

Brahminism, 109

Bravery, 61, 62, 119, 122, 126, 141, 143, 144, 149, 153, 154

Bread labour, 198 ff.; as *yajna*, 202; its economics, 201; law of—, 203; *see* Body labour

Britain, 169, 323, 324, 325, 362, 434, 438

British Air Force, 155

British Government, 323, 329, 349

British Navy, 155

British policy, 10

British rule, 331

Brutality, 50, 146

Brutalization, 139-40

Brute Force, 113, 417, 422; nothing before soul force, 337

Buddha, the, 95, 96, 165, 191, 203, 233, 399, 450

Buddhism, 93, 95, 96, 99, 116

Buddhistic influence, 433

Burma, 156, 337, 433

CAESAR, 204

Capital, 133, 159, 199, 208, 215, 255, 258, 339; as such not evil, 206; helpless without labour & *vice versa*, 206; no enemy of labour, 209

Capitalism, 205, 257, 259, 262, 375

Capitalists, 205, 210, 211, 215, 218, 219, 227, 250, 257, 258, 281, 375, 376; as trustees, 134-5; in free India—should become statutory trustees, 261

Carpentry, 200

Caste, 88, 108-11

Caste distinctions, 111

Caste system, 108

Cattle-breeding, 390; its improvement, 376

Cent per cent Swadeshi, 369

Centralization, 136, 137; *see* industrialization

Ceylon, 156, 337, 433

Ceylonese, 433

Chaitanya, 191, 320, 366

Charity, 9, 128, 143, 195

Charkha, 225, 348, 403, 407, 408; symbol of communal peace, 404; symbol of nation's prosperity and freedom, 404; can solve the problem of economic distress in a natural way, 404; has a message to U.S.A. & the world, 404; its message is to replace spirit of exploitation with that of service, 404; a symbol of non-violence; 405 supplementary to agriculture, 408; can serve as instru-

- ment of one's livelihood, 408;
- no universalization of—
- through mass production, 409;
- see* Spinning-wheel
- Chengiz Khan, 312
- China, 433
- Chinese, 148
- Christ, Jesus, 23, 55, 73, 97, 99, 100, 106, 133, 144, 164, 165, 181, 185, 191, 233, 282, 399, 450, 456; a prince among passive resisters, 180
- Christendom, 146
- Christian, Christians, 231, 247, 343, 376, 402, 419, 473, 494,
- Christian divines, limit the scope of Jesus' teachings to select individuals, 456
- Christian Service, 85
- Christianity, 92, 93, 94, 97, 98, 99, 100, 103, 231, 454; a denial of Jesus' teachings, 181; its birth, 181
- Church, 105, 106
- Churchill, 76
- Civil Disobedience, 138, 165; conditions precedent for—, 166; *see* Non-co-operation
- Civil marriages, welcomes as reform, 281
- Civil Resistance, 27
- Civilization, 10, 189, 201, 233, 321; modern —, 232; industrial—a disease, 233; satanic character of modern —, 233; western—, 234, 432; white— requires erection of legal barriers, 441; multiplicity of hospitals no sign of true—, 470
- Class barriers, 111
- Class conflict, 219
- Class war, 210, 261
- Collective conflicts, 156
- Columbus, 235
- Communal disturbance, 159
- Communal harmony, 398-402
- Communal unity, 356
- Communism, 90, 246, 255, 256; its true evolution possible through study of Eastern institutions, 245
- Communists, 246, 256, 259
- Congregational worship, 106
- Congress, 133, 150, 151, 162, 350, 351, 355, 356, 386, 397, *see* Indian National Congress
- Conscience, 20, 42; not the same thing for all, 420
- Conspiracy, 140
- Contraceptives, 287, 289; are an insult to womanhood, 288
- Conversion, 158
- Cow, 401; its place, 387; its protection means protection of the dumb creation of God, 387; mother of millions of Indian mankind, 387; purest type of sub-human life, 387; means entire sub-human world, 388; —protection wonderful phenomenon in human evolution, 388; —protection gift of Hinduism, 388; —protection central fact of Hinduism, 388
- Cow-slaughter, 388-9
- Cow worship, 116
- Cowardice, 61, 90, 119, 120, 140, 149, 150, 154

Cowardice or violence, 142-5
 Cranmer, 164
 Crucifixion of flesh, 17, 35, 36
 Czars, 164
 Czechoslovakia, 454
 Czechs, 148

DAMAYANTI, 297, 392

Daniel, 23, 164

Daridranarayan, 196

Darwin, 233

Dayananda, 191, 465

Death, 144, 154; only a big change in life, 461; and life—phases of the same thing, 461; man should love death as well as life, 462; brings deliverance from sufferings, 462

Death duties, 462

Decentralization, 136-7, 238

Delagoa, 329

Delhi, 323, 360

Democracy, 102, 131, 132, 145, 146, 255, 311, 323, 326, 340, 342, 343, 344, 345, 375, 376, 450; requires change of heart, 338; defined, 338; disciplined and enlightened finest thing in the world, 338; in—individual will be governed & limited by social will, 338; true—can never come through untruthful & violent means, 347; Western—diluted Nazism & Fascism, 348; no perfect—without perfect non-violence, 348

Destruction, weapons of, 153

De Valera, 141

Dharma, 404

Dharmayuddha, 167

Dheds, 405

Dhurna, 178

Dictatorship, 131, 133, 345

Diet, 464-6

Dietetics, 117, 377.

Disarmament, 451, 452, 453

Discipline, 20, 42, 45, 89, 111, 123, 127, 160, 338; voluntary—first prerequisite of corporate freedom, 469; learnt in the school of adversity, 469

Divine inspiration, 31

Divine Law, 188; of love, 405

Divinity, 422

Division of labour, 201

Divorce, 299

Dnyandev, 203

Dowry system, must go, 298; as condition of marriage is discredit to education and dishonour to womanhood, 298

Draupadi, 297

Drink, more a disease than vice, 471

Dublas, 405

Duel throng, 44

Durbar, 241

Duties & Rights, 94, 135-36

Dyer, 184

EARTHQUAKE, of Bihar, 77, 78

East, 230, 396, 419, 450, 456, 481

Eastern Culture, 432

Eastern inferiority, 419

Economics, untrue which

- ignores moral values, 263; true—does not militate against highest ethical standard, 264; which inculcates Mammon worship is a false and dismal science, 264; true—stands for social justice, 264
- Economic equality, 266-7; master key to non-violent independence, 257; means abolition of conflict between capital & labour, 257; means everybody should have enough for his needs, 267
- Economic laws, 263
- Economic Reorganization, 369
- Eden, 368
- Education, 248, 309, 377; true—of the intellect through proper exercise & training of the bodily organs, 376; highest development of body & mind possible under his system of education, 379; means all-round drawing out of the best in the child & man, 379; the only—is that which is self-supporting, 380; through handicrafts, 380; English—, 378; woman's—should not be different from man's—, 381; university—, 381
- Ego, 5, 6
- Egypt, 241, 431, 450
- Electricity, 133, 251, 370
- Employers, 211; should become labourers' trustees, 210; should regard workers as real owners, 215
- Ends & means, 226
- England, 152, 153, 242, 243, 316, 324, 363, 384, 411, 435, 482, 483
- English language, 207, 382, 384, 456,—can be taught as second optional language, 383; emasculated—educated Indians, 383
- English marriage, 279
- English officers, 411
- Englishmen, 217, 317, 322, 324, 421
- Equal citizenship, 402
- Equal distribution, 268, 269; implies that each man should have wherewithal to supply all his natural needs, 268
- Equal treatment, for the whole of humanity, 419
- Ethics, 424; fundamental—is common to all religions, 69
- Euclid, 121, 131, 252, 260, 372
- Europe, 146, 161, 164, 231, 241, 309, 451, 452, 471; Europe represents Satan, 30, 97
- European dress, 471
- Europeans, 324, 432
- Evil, 48, 50, -doer, 27; its genesis, 74-75
- Experience, religious, 69, 72
- Experiments, certain conditions should be observed to make, 42
- Exploitation, 28, 135, 148; an essence of violence, 369
- FACTORIES (huge), 137
- Faith, 4, 5, 8, 10, 14, 17, 18, 24, 26, 28, 29, 30, 47-50, 53, 54, 61, 62, 63-70, 72, 74, 75, 84, 85, 86, 87, 91, 99, 106, 112,

- 113-5, 122-3, 132, 144, 150, 249, 322; is consciousness of God within, 63; transcends reason, 64
- Faith cure, 82
- Farmer, devoured by cattle, 391; *see* Kisan
- Fascist rule, 326
- Fasts, are a part of his being, 35; imposed by higher power, 35; a true prayer, 35; when to do, 36; coercive, 36-37
- Fear, 49, 60, 61, 62, 92, 114, 135
- Fearlessness, 59-62; first requisite of spirituality, 59, how can—be attained, 59, 60; absolutely necessary for votary of truth, 308
- Female sex, its shocking degradation by man, 290, *see* Women
- Forbearance, 128
- Foreign aggression, 155
- Foreign invasion, 133, 137
- Foreign Settlements, 331
- Foreign yoke, 156
- Forgiveness, 142; quality of soul, 420; attitude of the strong, 421
- France, 152, 242, 331
- Fraud, 29, 31
- Freedom, 141, 142, 148, 150, 151, 152, 154, 155, 156, 311, 313, 316, 338; individual—312
- French, 207, 331
- French India, 331
- Frontier Province, 125
- Fundamental truths, 19
- GALLOWS, 140
- Gandhi, M. K., claims he is making experiments about some eternal verities of life, 3; claims to be a scientist, 3; would not sacrifice Truth & *Ahimsa* for deliverance of country or religion, 3; votary of Truth from childhood, 4; claims to be householder & man of service, 4; says loin-cloth is organic evolution in his life, 4; hates privileges & monopolies, 5; says he must reduce himself to zero, 5; his heart's desire is service of the poor, 7; wants to identify himself with everything that lives, 9; believes in absolute oneness of humanity, 8; believes that most spiritual act must be most practical, 8; claims himself to be a practical dreamer, 8; claims he harbours enmity against no person or nation, 9, 10; deals with wrong & does not hurt wrong-doer, 9, 10; becomes sick of adoration of unthinking masses, 11; does not recall a moment when title of Mahatmaship tickled him, 11; regards politics as his least part, 11; regards his greatness depends upon incessant drudgery of pure workers, 11; regards his insistence on truth & non-violence & *Brahmacharya* as his real part, 11; believes he is one of the humblest of God's creatures, 11, 12, 20; regards as blasphemy to represent him as Shri Krishna or an

avatar, 12; suggests respect for him can be shown by promoting activities he stands for, 12; warns against erection of his statue, 12; claims his national service is part of training for *moksha* in this existence, 13; lays claim to no superhuman powers, 13; asserts he can work no wonders, 14; on his capacity to command implicit obedience, 14, 17, 18; his knowledge of his limitations, 14, 18, 19; his implicit faith in God, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22; an irrepressible optimist, 16; prefers assassin's bullet to creeping paralysis, 16; his philosophy excludes possibility of harm to one's cause by outside agencies, 17; claims he is prompted by instinct, 18; has no secrets, 19; does not accept claim of saintliness, 20; is not disheartened by defeat, 21; asserts he has never broken his promise in his public or private career, 21; is shaken to his roots at breach of promise, 21; never loses optimism, 21; his leadership, 21-22; claims he has become integral part of the nation, 22; hopes India would come to her own by non-violent means, 22; an explorer of non-violence, 23; claims to be a practical idealist, 23; his life dedicated to the spread of non-violence, 23;

his mission is to teach & practise Satyagraha, 23; defines his mission, 23-30; *Ahimsa* & Truth are as his two lungs, 24; claims to throw new light on many old truths, 25; experiments in Truth & Non-violence on as vast a scale as possible, 25; has no desire to found sect, 25; his mission is to show people how they can solve their own difficulties, 25; admits he cannot live up to convictions he stands for, 26; is by instinct truthful, but not non-violent, 26; believes God has given him power to guide world on the pattern of non-violence, 28; his message is for whole world, 28; his patriotism consistent with broadest good of humanity, 28; his religion & patriotism embrace all life, 28; hopes to realize brotherhood of man through realization of the freedom of India, 28; asserts he practises what is capable of being practised by anybody, 29; asserts that nation has a right to vindicate her honour by violence, 29; says that present non-violence is restricted to winning freedom & regulating international relations, 29; says his message is universal, 30; has been a willing slave to Inner Voice for more than

half a century, 33; describes voice of God, which he heard, 33; learned to consciously rely on God before he was 15, 34; claims fasts & capacity to suffer fasts come from God, 35; thinks consistency runs through his seeming inconsistencies, 37; his inconsistencies so-called, 37-39; asserts he has grown from truth to truth, 38; believes his growth would continue even after dissolution of flesh, 38; rejects Shastras if they do not carry conviction, 38; says he has sacrificed no principle to gain political advantage, 38; claims a thoughtless word hardly escapes his tongue or pen, 39; says one must yield to majority if personal religion or moral code is not involved, 39; believes love sustains earth, 40; regards all greatest & least steps he has taken are directed by spirit, 40; writes as spirit moves him, 40; believes what he has done would endure & not what he has said or written, 41; finds that approach to truth is through love, 42, 51; believes what is possible for him is possible even to a child, 43; claims he has faint glimpses of Absolute Truth, 44; his devotion to truth drew him into politics, 44; dimly perceives

a living power, 47; confesses he has no arguments to convince through reason, 48; admits he has no special revelation of God's will, 49; claims he is surer of God's existence than his own, 49; claims he realizes God's omnipresence, 49; warns he can work no wonders, 49; does not recall a single instance when God has forsaken him, 50; wants to identify himself with the least in the world, 52; wants to see God through service of humanity, 52-53; appears to him only in action, 53; claims there is truly efficient art in his life, 55; sees God in the creations of art, 56; says reason misused becomes lunacy, 63; says he holds his religion dearer than his country & that he is Hindu first & nationalist afterwards, 64; believes no religion can be sustained by brute force, 65; does not believe there will be one religion, 66; considers everything from moral stand-point, 66; strives to induce mutual tolerance, 66; wants India to be wholly tolerant, 67; works to promote toleration among people of different faiths, 67; applies tests of Truth & *Ahimsa* to scriptural interpretation which is repugnant to reason or moral sense,

68; loves to see bright side of things to exclusion of seamy side, 69; does not believe in personal God, 70; calls Great Power called Allah, Khuda or God, by name of Truth, 73; believes God rules in tiniest details of his life, 77; believes calamities come to mankind as chastisement for their sins, 77; believes effect of Christianity on India is disastrous, 98; Jesus' suffering is a factor in composition of his faith in non-violence, 98; what Jesus means to him, 98-99; says his political & other activities are derived from religion, 102; revolts against untouchability since childhood, 107; aspires to regenerate humanity by removal of untouchability, 108; on *ahimsa*, 112-13; learns non-violence from his wife, 113; asserts he is not a Christian in disguise, 115; practises non-violence for 50 years, 130; fancies he has seen the light dimly, 132; supports minimum State ownership, 135; on Swaraj, 136-7; prefers violence to cowardice, 142; detects no passivity in Jesus, 146; on doctrine of sword, 161; on patriotism, 161; says India has mission for world, 161; says his religion has no geographical limits, 161; says his life is

dedicated to India through the religion of non-violence, 161; if India makes violence her creed, he would not care to live in India, 161; his patriotism subservient to religion, 161; on unarmed victory, 161; says national policy will incline towards militarism of a modified character, 162; path of militarization, 162-3; if India accepts eternal law of love she would become unquestioned leader of world, 163; says soul-less India will merely be an imitation of West, 163; on Passive Resistance, 164-5; says it blesses him who uses it & him against whom it is used, 164; says the stoniest heart will be melted by Passive Resistance, 164; says soul force is infinitely superior to body force, 165; on the meaning & purpose of civil disobedience, 165; says it is the purest type of constitutional agitation, 165; regards it as the inherent right of citizens, 166; on condition precedent for C.D., 166; on character of Satyagraha, 166-7; says it is not previously planned, 167; defines Satyagraha as vindication of truth by suffering on one's own self, 167; non-co-operation & civil resistance are off-shoots of Satyagraha, 167;

says it teaches us the art of living as well as dying, 168; the evolution of Satyagraha, 168-9; says Satyagraha is not yet regarded as of value in the solution of world problems, 168; on the technique of Satyagraha, 168-70; on the power of suffering, 170; says things of fundamental importance are to be purchased with suffering, 170; says Satyagrahi bids goodbye to fear, & is instinctively law abiding, 170; says it is one of the most powerful methods of direct action, 170; on the Code of Satyagraha, 170; on qualifications of a Satyagrahi, 171-2; says only when one sees one's mistake with convex lens & does just the reverse in the case of others, can arrive at a first, relative estimate of the two, 172; on Satyagraha & repression, 172-3; says in the long run Satyagraha results in the least loss of life, 173; on victory of Satyagraha, 173-5; regards it as the greatest force because it is the highest expression of soul, 174; says law of progression applies to every righteous struggle, 174; says if Satyagrahi holds out to the end, victory is certain, 174; says self-sacrifice of one innocent man is a million times more potent than the sacrifice

of million men who die in the act of killing others, 174; says in democracy desired end should be achieved by collective effort of people, 174; on a true Satyagrahi, 174-5; says doctrine of Satyagraha is capable of assimilation by thousands upon thousands of people in all ages & climes, 175; on conditions necessary for Satyagraha, 176; training in Satyagraha for self defence, 176-7; on non-cooperation, 179-84; says Bhagavadgita is a gospel of non-cooperation between forces of darkness and light, 179; says non-co-operation has religious basis in the basic principle of non-violence, 180; says Christianity is a denial of Jesus' central teachings, 181; says the word Islam implies unadulterated peace, 181; non-violence is only a means to secure co-operation of opponents consistently with Truth and non-violence, 181; on ethics of non-co-operation, 181-2; says law of Satyagraha is an eternal principle, 183; says by prayerful discipline he has ceased to hate anybody, 183; says when he finds that the institution, instead of conducting to growth, impedes it, he holds it to be his bounden duty to be disloyal to it, 184;

says fasting without a living faith in God is of no use, 184; on fasting, 184-6; says a Satyagrahi should fast only as a last resort, 186; says fasting quickens the spirit of prayer, 186; interprets gospel of non-possession, 187-92; says contentment is his richest treasure, 188; says a follower of the law of love cannot hold anything against tomorrow, 188; says ignorance of Divine law has given rise to inequalities, 188; says the rich should take initiative in dispossession, 189; says we must examine ourselves from the standpoint of renunciation, 189; says humility constitutes knowledge, 190; says every moment should be filled with *sattvika*, mental or physical activity, 190; says highest fulfilment of religion requires giving up of all religions, 191; says love and exclusive possession can never go together, 191; says risk of living is derived from renunciation, 192; says all have a right and should desire to live 125 years while performing service without an eye on result, 192; says can picture to himself a time when the rich will spurn to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor and the poor will cease to envy the rich, 193; says in a most perfect world we

shall fail to avoid inequalities, 193; says the rule of the poor is coming whether through arms or non-violence, 194; says moneyed men may earn more but for the service of all, 194; says giving alms instead of work is misplaced charity, 194-5; says for hungry millions the only God is their bread, 197; says he recognizes no God except that God that is to be found in the hearts of dumb millions, 197; says that God said that those who ate without work were thieves, 198; says gospel of bread labour first came home to him from Tolstoy's teachings, 198; says reason also leads to identical conclusion, 198; says if all worked for bread, distinctions of rank would be obliterated, 199; says intelligent bread labour is the highest form of social service, 199; says there must be something radically wrong where scavenging has been made the concern of a separate class in society, 200; says that he believes in division of labour or work, 201; his insistence on equality of wages, 201; says economics of bread labour are the living way of life, 201; says that adults above a certain age who would contribute bread-labour should be entitled to the vote, 202; says labouring for the poor even

as they do is better worship of God, 202; says all work done in God's name assumes equal merit, 202; says even to Buddha he would not have hesitated to ask why he did not teach the gospel of work, in preference to that of contemplation, 203; says ignorance and negligence are largely responsible for stark poverty and unemployment, 204; says there is enough employment in India for all who will work with their hands and feet honestly, 204; says although he does not discount intellectual labour, it is no compensation for bodily labour, 204; says mental labour is for soul and is its own satisfaction, 204; says capital and labour should supplement and help each other, 205; says he is aiming at conversion and not destruction of capitalists, 205; says capital in some form or other will always be needed, 205; on labour's duties and powers, 206; says if labour would only understand that capital is helpless without labour, labour will immediately come to its own, 206; says labour is more than money, 208; says he wants organization of labour on Indian lines, 209; says in India class war is not inevitable if we understand the message of non-violence, 210; says strike should be considered a crime

if capitalists accept the principle of arbitration, 211; says strikes are a symptom of existing unrest, 211; regards it a serious mistake to make use of labour strikes for political ends, 211; says labourers should raise themselves to the status of part proprietors, 212; states conditions of a successful strike, 212; says sympathetic strikes should be for self-purification, 216; says they must not fight but plead with blacklegs, 216; says he would like to use landlords and capitalists for service of masses, 218; says kisan is salt of earth which should belong to him, 219; says in democratic Swaraj kisan must hold power in all its phases including political power, 220; says those who live by the sword die by the sword, 221; says he believes in the doctrine of *advaita*, 223; says spiritual law expresses itself through ordinary activities of life, 223; says it affects economic, social and political fields, 223; says God demands complete self-surrender as the price for real freedom, 224; says he cannot find God apart from humanity, 224; regards spinning as the greatest prayer, the greatest worship and the greatest sacrifice, 225; says it stands for the greatest good of all, 225; says *Unto This Last* marked turning point

in his life, 225; says to attain perfect purity one has to become absolutely passion-free in thought, word and action, 225-6; says he has had experiences of dormant passions lying hidden within him, 226; on means and ends, 226; regards true source of rights is duty, 227; defines Yajna as directed to the welfare of others without desire for reward, 228; regards life of sacrifice is pinnacle of art, and is full of true joy, 230; says present-day Europe represents the spirit of Satan, 231; says Europe is worshipping Mammon, 231; does not regard railways and hospitals as test of high and pure civilization, 231; says it is the evolution of the soul to which intellect and all our faculties are to be devoted, 231; on the bane of modern civilization, 231-3; says industrial civilization is all evil, 233; says steamships and telegraphs can stay without the support of industrialism, 233; says his concern is to destroy industrialism at any cost, 233; says supreme consideration with him is man, 234; says machines should not tend to make atrophied limbs of man, 235; says faith in his work is sustaining him, 235; objects to craze of machinery and not machinery as such, 235;

says he is opposed to machinery which displaces labour and leaves it idle, 236; is uncompromisingly against all destructive machinery, 237; says mania for mass production responsible for world crises, 237; says machinery helps a few to ride on the backs of millions, 238; on characteristics of the machine, 239-41; says mankind must act on the principle of *Unto This Last*, 241; prophesies that future of industrialism is dark, 242; says it will be a curse for mankind, 242; regards India industrialized will be curse for other nations, 243; regards that some key industries are necessary, 243; says industrialization will lead to passive and active exploitation of villagers, 244; says planning which neglects manpower is lopsided, 244; says from scientific study of Eastern institutions they can evolve truer Socialism and Communism, 245; says Communism is explicit in the first verse of *Ishopanishad*, 246; says social justice is impossible of attainment by force, 246; on socialism of his conception, 246-7; on equality in socialism, 247-8; says socialism possible through non-violence, 247-8; says socialism can be brought about by education of 'haves' and 'have-nots', 248-9; says truth

and *ahimsa* must incarnate in socialism, 249; regards satyagraha as sure method to socialism, 250; believes nationalization of his conception will be predominantly based on Charkha, and all it implies, 251; says industrialization must subserve villages and their crafts, 251; does not share socialistic belief that centralization of the necessities of life will conduce to common welfare, 251; says ends of socialism can be achieved by adopting non-violence, 251; presents picture of India of his conception, 251-2; prophesies Bolshevik regime in its present form cannot last for long, 254; says conception of Western socialism and communism different from ours, 254; says Indian socialism and communism should be based on non-violence, 255; says he cannot accept benevolent or any other dictatorship, 255; says his communism is not very different from socialism, 256; says economic equality is master-key to non-violent independence, 257; it means abolition of conflict between capital and labour, 257; says he still adheres to doctrine of trusteeship, 257; says theory of trusteeship survives all other theories, 259; says absolute trusteeship is an abstraction like

Euclid's definition of a point, 260; says trustee has no heir but the public, 261; says landlords should become trustees of poor kisans, 262; on the formula of Practical Trusteeship, 262; does not draw sharp difference between economics and ethics, 263; says economics injuring moral well-being of individual or nation is immoral, 263; gives his idea of society, 266; economic equality according to him means that everybody should have enough for his or her needs, 267; says under his plan, State will carry out will of the people, 267; says his ideal is equal distribution, but being unrealizable would work for equitable distribution, 268; tells how principle of equal distribution can be practised in life, 269; says *ahimsa* is attribute of society, 270; says marriage must impose discipline upon partners, 272; says life without *brahmacharya* is insipid and animal-like, 272; says observance of law of continence impossible without living faith in God, 273; straight way to cultivate *brahmacharya* is Ramanama, 273; calls *brahmacharya* a way of life leading to Brahma, 273; says mere control of animal passion is not tantamount to observing *brahmacharya*, 275; says he evolved

his own rules for the practice of *brahmacharya*, 277; says it is an ideal for the aspirants of higher life, 278; says God is Law, 278; on the aim and purpose of marriage, 279; wants to identify himself with sins of little ones (children) in the hope that he would some day see God, 281; on the character of children, 281; says law of love could be best understood and learned through children, 282; says sexual union is crime when the desire for progeny is absent, 283; regards self-control as the best remedy for birth-control, 284; says problem of over-population can be met by proper land system, better agriculture and supplementary industry, 285; says pestilence, wars and famines are cursed antidotes against cursed lust, 285; says it is insult to fair sex to put up her case in support of birth-control, 286; says introduction of contraceptives made the task of reformers who work for purity of social life well-nigh impossible, 287; says self-control is for the whole of humanity, 290; says it is inhuman to impose Sterilization Law on people, 290; regards woman as embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering, humility, faith and knowledge, 290; woman must not adorn for man,

290; became mentally a woman in order to steal into her heart, 290; says in moral power woman is immeasurably man's superior, 291; says woman is personification of self-sacrifice, 291; says woman is gifted with equal mental capacities, 292; says in a well-ordered society additional burden of maintaining family should not fall upon woman, 294; says it is woman's mission to exhibit *ahimsa* at its highest and best, 294; regards woman as incarnation of *ahimsa*, 295; on her special mission, 295; would treat daughters and sons on footing of equality, 296; on equality of sexes, 296-7; on purdah, 298; on dowry system, 298; prefers voluntary widowhood, 298; says it should not be imposed by religion, 299; would not hesitate to accept divorce if that were the only alternative, 299; regards sex education necessary, with a view to controlling passion, 299; says it must have as its object conquest and sublimation of sex, 300; says it is physically impossible to violate woman against her will, 301; says God is one unfailing protector, 302; says woman can employ any means to defend her honour, 302; says humanity one day will rise against the curse of prostitution, 302; tells

how to deal with brothels, 302; Truth means that we have to rule our life by the law of Truth at any cost, 304; gives meaning of *ahimsa*, 304-5; on the vow of celibacy, 306; on the control of palate, 306-7; on the vow of non-thieving, 307; says politics diversified from religion has no meaning, 310; says politics are a part of our being, 310; says his concept of freedom is co-extensive with the freedom of man in all his majesty, 312; says one must refuse to purchase freedom at the cost of self-respect, 313; says he will strive for a constitution which will release India from all thralldom and patronage, 314; independence of his conception means realization of the Kingdom of God within us and on this earth, 314; says independence should be political, economic and moral, 315; says he would far rather that India perished than that she won freedom at the sacrifice of truth, 316; says through her deliverance India wants to deliver the so-called weaker races of the world, 316; Swaraj for him means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen, 317; his definition of Swaraj, 317; Swaraj of his dreams is poor man's Swaraj, 318, his Swaraj will be no majority rule,

318; says freedom of speech and pen is foundation of Swaraj, 319; clarifies meaning of Swaraj 319-21; says Swaraj will help keep intact the genius of our civilization, 321; India's greater glory will consist in regarding Englishmen as friends and partners in a new commonwealth of nations, 324; by Ramarajya he means Divine Raj, 326; says ancient ideal of Ramarajya is one of true democracy, 326; says his political independence would not be an imitation of British House of Commons, etc., 326; compares *nirvana* with Ramarajya, 327; his stand on Kashmir, 327-8; on Goa, 328-30; regards partition un-Islamic, 331; says Islam stands for unity and brotherhood of mankind, 331; regards two-nation theory as untruth, 332; says India and Pakistan should not solve differences by force, 333; on India's mission, 334-7; says he lives for India's freedom and would die for it because it is part of Truth, 334; says his patriotism is not exclusive, 334; says India has unbroken tradition of non-violence, 335; says spirit of democracy requires change of heart, 337; defines democracy, 338; says democracy disciplined and enlightened is finest thing in the world, 338; says a

born democrat is a born disciplinarian, 339; explains how true democracy can be worked in India, 339-45; on dictatorship, 345-6; on mobocracy, 346; says democracy and military spirit are contradictions in terms, 347; says Western democracy is on a trial, 348; regarding decay in Congress, 350-51; says Congress has yet to win economic, social and moral freedom, 350-51; says Congress in its present form has outlived its use, 352; says it should turn itself into Lok Sevak Sangh, 352; gives constitution of Lok Sevak Sangh, 352-3; says ministership should not be created for the sake of conciliatory interests, 354; says ministers and legislators should be fearless in their duty, 356; on code of ministers, 356-7; on legislatures, 357-8; says India is to be found in her 7 lakh villages, 361; says wisdom drops from the lips of peasants, 362; regards growth of cities as evil, 362; says village movement is education for cities and villages, 364; says in his picture of independence, unit is the village community, 364; explains his conception of village unit, 364; says want of corporate sanitation, deficient diet and inertia are holding villages in their grip, 365; says village move-

ment is an attempt to establish healthy contact with villages, 365; on Samagra Gram Seva, 365-71; on Village republics, 371-3; his idea of Village Swaraj, 374-5; says kisan is backbone of Panchayat Raj, 375; says to make Panchayats effective level of people's education has to be raised, 375; regarding function of Panchayats, 375-6; defines education, 377, 379; says they must have new type of education for creation of new world, 377; says English education has starved our minds, 378; says children must be taught dignity of labour, 378; says true education of intelligence can come through proper exercise and training of bodily organs, 378; attaches more importance to cultural aspect of education, 379; on *Nai Talim*, 380-81; says university education should be brought in line with basic education, 381; on medium of instruction, 382-3; says interprovincial language can only be Hindustani written in Nagari or Urdu script, 383; says Hindustani cannot take place of provincial language, 383; says English education has emasculated English-educated Indians, 383; says he does not decry English or its noble literature, 384; regards linguistic basis as correct basis

for demarcating provinces, 385; says mother cow is as useful dead as when she is alive, 387; on the place of cow in Hinduism, 388; says he would by personal conduct instil conviction into minds of those holding different views that cow-killing is a sin, 388; says it cannot be stopped by law, 388; suggests positive measures to protect cow, 389-90; says lack of collective effort has resulted in deterioration of cow, 391; says farmer is being devoured by cattle, 391; his suggestions for collective farming, 391-2; says due care in diet and exercise would give no occasion for illness, 393; explains what he means by nature cure, 393-4; says sovereign remedy of illness lies in Ramanama, 395; on corporate sanitation, 396-7; on communal harmony, 398-9; says each must respect other's religion, 399; says there is nothing in the Koran to warrant the use of force for conversion, 400; on gospel of charkha, 403-9; on meaning of Swadeshi, 410-15; on gospel of love, 416-20; regards that all life is one, 424-30; on nationalism, 434-41; on nationalism, *vs.* internationalism, 434-44; on racialism, 440-41; on war and peace, 444-7;

on Nuclear War, 447-51; on way to peace, 451-8; on the world of tomorrow, 459-60; on death, 461-2; on desires, 463; on detachment, 463-5; on destiny, 464; on meat-eating, 466; on vegetarianism, 466-7; on food research, 467; on moral basis of vegetarianism, 468; on self-restraint, 468; on discipline, 469; on division of labour, 469-70; on doctors, 470; on dress, 471; on drink, 471-2; believes in the absolute oneness of God, 473; on flags, 473; on forgiveness, 473; on goodness, 473-4; on greatness, 474; says God alone is judge of true greatness, 474; on *gurus*, 474; believes in the Hindu theory of *guru*, 474; on three great influences on his life, 475-6; on his political *guru*, 475; on happiness, 476; on health, 476; on body and soul, 477; on honesty, 478; on ideals, 478; on immortality, 478-9; on individual, 479; on insurance, 479; on journalism, 479-80; on modern journalism, 480; on advertisements, 480; on newspapers and truth, 481; on power of the press, 481-2; on jury trials, 482; on lawyers, 482; on law and truth, 482; on duty of lawyers, 482-3; on leadership, 483-4; on means & ends, 484; on medicine, 485;

- on money, 485; on morality, 485; on priests, 485-6; on public funds, 486; on public institutions, 486-7; on public life, 487; on punctuality, 487; on races, 488; on reincarnations, 488; on rivers, 489; on secrecy, 489; on self-purification, 489-90; on simple living, 490; on sins and sinners, 490-1; on confession, 491-2; on slander, 492; on smoking, 492-3; on social reforms, 493; on spiritualism, 494; on suffrage, 494; on superstition, 495; on thought-power, 495; on youth, 496
- Gandhian Economic order, under it character of production will be determined by social necessity, 263
- Gandhian ideology, 26
- Ganga, 273, 489
- Gangsterism, 453
- Garibaldi, 140
- General Buller, 323
- Germany, 242, 326, 435
- Ghanchi*, 367
- Ghani*, 367
- Gita, Bhagawad, 10, 24, 59, 71, 77, 94, 95, 98, 115, 168, 190, 191, 198, 202, 203, 228, 274, 299, 367, 487; argues out law of love or abandon in scientific manner, 68; Gandhiji's mother, 96
- Goa, 328, 329, 330
- God, *passim*, 171, 183, 186, 188, 189, 190, 192, 195, 196, 203, 204, 206, 220, 223, 231, 233, 242, 249, 255, 272, 283, 308, 310, 311, 326, 327, 330, 334, 363, 387, 394, 397, 421, 422, 434, 454, 456, 464, 466, 489, 492; always saves world from consequences of unintended errors of men who live in fear of Him, 46; reveals himself daily to every man, 49; nature of, 49-52; through service, 52-53; His mercy, 53;—realization, 83; His response, 85-86; His grace 91, 114; as bread and butter for poor people, 197;—of the poor, 197; Worship of—, 202; demands self-surrender, 224; not apart from humanity, 224; His scheme, 229; as Living Force, 249; fullest life impossible without living faith in God, 273; His grace not possible without complete surrender, 277; is Law, 278; is Truth, 334; all men are equal in His eyes, 439; His laws are inscrutable, 488
- Gokhale, G.K.; Gandhiji's political guru, 475
- Gold, 201
- Good of all, 194
- Goondaism, 136, 213, 214, 215, 399
- Goondas, 399
- Gopal, 245
- Goseva, 389
- Goseva Sangh, 354
- Government, its duty to ensure bread labour, 204; good—no substitute for self-government, 320
- Gram Panchayats, 261; *see* *Panchayats*

Gramsevak, 367

Gravitation, 109

Greece, 57, 241

Gujarat, 452

Gujarati, Gujaratis, 384, 386

Guru Govind Singh, 140

HALLUCINATION, 31, 32, 33, 46

Hand-*chakkis*, 371

Handicrafts, exclude exploitation & slavery; *see* Village Industries

Hand-spinning, hand-weaving, will make largest contribution to the economic & moral regeneration of India, 407; *see* Village Industries & Charkha

Hanuman, 79

Harijan, 384

Hartal, 222; *see* Strikes

Hatred, 94, 99; for deed and not doer, 124-5; cannot be turned into love, 446

Health, the law of Nature, 477

Heroism, 139, 147

'High-and-Low'-ness, 108

Himalayas, 315, 461

Himsa, 112, 123, 143, 227, 425; *see* Violence

Hind Swaraj, rule of all people, 318; *see* Ramarajya

Hindu, Hindus, 190, 227, 247, 318, 333, 376, 388, 389, 390, 398, 399, 401, 402, 419, 473; & Muslims come from the same root, 332

Hindu-Muslim unity, 359; can be promoted by sharing one another's sorrows, 398; Gandhiji makes no distinction between Hindus & Muslims, 398

Hinduism, 50, 64, 67, 88, 95, 96, 98, 99, 100, 103, 107, 108, 109, 115, 116, 250, 255, 280, 297, 299, 309, 388, 399, 400, 410, 454; not exclusive, 92-100; Hinduism & *ahimsa*, 93-4; fully satisfies Gandhiji's soul, 94; its unique contribution, 116; teaches Gandhiji to respect all religions, 327; most tolerant because it is non-proselytizing, 410; succeeded in absorbing Buddhism, 410

Hindu Raj, 326

Hindu scriptures, 51, 68

Hindu society, 297

Hindustan, 332, 431; *see* India

Hindustani, 383

Hindustani Talimi Sangh, 354

Hiroshima, 450

Hitler, 149, 169, 219, 454

Human institutions, 37

Human life, full of compromises, 39

Human nature, 359

Human Race, 104, 113

Humanity, 7, 13, 16, 20, 25, 52, 65, 74, 88, 98, 107, 122, 140

Humanization, 160

Humiliation, 149

Humility, 6, 8, 16, 28, 42, 44, 52, 65, 86, 101, 114, 120, 155, 190

Hygiene, 109, 374

Hypocrisy, 32, 60

IDEAL ECONOMY, 264; under —no one should suffer from want of food & clothing, 264

Idol Worship, 104

Idolatry, 63, 104-06

- Ill-will, 91
 Image, 86
 Image Worship, 104
 Imagination, 33, 34
 Immoralities, 50
 Imperialism, 113
 Impatience, 139
 Incarnation, 63, 76
 Independence, 38, 39, 132, 145, 151, 155, 158, 160, 315, 324, 325, 330, 335, 438; must begin at the bottom, 251; 371 means realization of *Kingdom of God within you*, 314; should be political, economic & moral, 315; moral—means freedom from armed defence forces, 315; national—, 316; individual—, 316; means *Rama-rajya*, 326; isolated—should not be the goal of world & States, 438
 India, 18, 22, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 99, 100, 107, 142, 148, 156, 160, 161, 164, 182, 193, 204, 210, 211, 218, 225, 234, 236, 239, 241, 242, 243, 252, 255, 257, 261, 262, 269, 281, 288, 289, 308, 309, 311, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 324, 325, 329, 331, 333, 334, 335, 336, 343, 359, 361, 362, 363, 369, 370, 372, 375, 376, 384, 385, 386, 390, 394, 396, 398, 403, 404, 406, 408, 409, 411, 418, 422, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 440, 441, 450, 455, 461, 465, 471, 473, 484; her soul can defy physical combination of a whole world, 27; lives in villages, 82; her way, 148; new—should show way to hungry world, 155; through non-violence—could make great contribution to world peace, 155; rising in two new States, 156; its economic contribution, 264; needs distribution of capital in $7\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of villages, 268; guaranteeing no freedom to the lowliest is not true India, 313; not in cities but in its $7\frac{1}{2}$ lakh villages, & Pakistan, 333; & Pakistan should settle differences by mutual consultation, 333; fitted for religious supremacy, 334; not a nation of cowards, 334; its mission, 334-37; its freedom can never be a menace to world, 334; free & awakened—has message for the world, 335; is the land of *karma*, 335; her unbroken tradition of non-violence from time immemorial, 335; her destiny is to deliver her message of non-violence to the world, 335; in danger of losing her soul, 335; her destiny lies along the bloodless way of peace, 335; the nursery of many blended cultures & civilizations, 337; if—fails, Asia dies, 337; not to be a theocratic State, 337; World expects greatness and goodness from—337; has still to attain social, moral & economic independence, 352;—

- of Gandhiji's dreams, 359-60;
 should continually progress
 along lines suited to her genius,
 373; should not be a third-rate
 & even first-class copy of
 dying civilization, 373; embra-
 ces humanity, 436
- Indian Civilization, 365, 431
- Indian culture, 431; a fusion of
 all & essentially Eastern, 431
- Indian humanity, 437
- Indian National Congress, 349,
 350; *see* Congress
- Indian Nationalism, has struck a
 different path, 436
- Indian Opinion*, 39
- Indian students, 324
- Indian Swaraj, 318; *see* Swaraj
- Indian Union, 402
- Indian Vernaculars, 309
- Indians, 217, 324, 329, 331, 356,
 376, 402, 473
- Individual, 263, 371; can defy
 the whole might of the unjust
 empire, 27, 121, 122; must
 know the art of self-defence,
 61; as unit, 252
- Individual liberty, essential for
 life in society, 439
- Individuality, 135
- Indonesia, 331
- Industrialism, 233; its dark future,
 242
- Industrialization, its cause, 241-5;
 on a mass scale, 244; planned
 to destroy villages & village
 crafts, 251
- Inequality, 110, 193, 255; in
 intelligence & even in op-
 portunity will last till the end
 of time, 266
- Infallibility, 19
- Inhambane, 329
- Inner call, 26
- Inner Voice, 31-34, 35, 146;
 requires training to acquire
 capacity to hear, 32; is un-
 mistakable, 33
- Inspiration, 19
- Inter-dining, 109, 110
- Intermarriage, 109, 110
- Internal foes, 59, 60
- Internationalist, Internationalism,
 436
- Ireland, 141
- Ishopanishad*, 88, 244
- Islam, 57, 73, 93, 100, 103, 180,
 181, 331, 398, 399, 400, 454,
 473; a religion of peace, 99;
 its contribution to India, 100;
 means peace, 117; its basis not
 violence, 181; its distinctive
 contribution is its unadulterat-
 ed belief in the oneness of God,
 400
- Islamic Culture, 431
- Italy, 326
- JAILS, 160
- Jains, 79
- Jainism, 116, 429
- Jamnalal, 260
- Jamuna, 489
- Janaka, 7, 116
- Japan, 162, 242, 433, 448, 449,
 454
- Japanese, 217, 382, 448
- Jawaharlal Nehru, 331
- Jekyll & Hyde, 19
- Jerusalem, 165
- Jews, 247, 419, 473

Journalism, 39, 40, 41; its sole aim is service, 479; its true function is to educate public mind, 479

Judicial adjudication, 213

Juliet, 293

Jungle fever, 140

KABIR, 191

Kaira District, 323

Karachi Congress, 250

Kama, arch-enemy of man, 299

Karmayogi, 406

Karnataka, 385

Kashmir, 151, 152, 327-28

Kashmiris, 327

Kauravas, 179

Kemal Pasha, 141

Kerala, 385

Khadi, Khaddar, 239, 309, 370, 374 —has far greater value as an instrument of winning Swaraj through non-violent means, 406; the livery of India's freedom, 406; mentality means decentralization of the production & distribution of the necessities of life, 406

Khansaheb, 125

Kingdom of God, 86, 88, 182, 264, 415

Kingdom of Heaven, 102, 125

Kisan, 219, 220, 262; the backbone, 375

Koran, the, 50, 67, 68, 92, 98, 100, 117, 181; does not warrant the use of force for conversion, 400

Krishna, 98, 106, 141, 227, 450

Kshatriya, 107, 109

LABOUR, 76, 133, 159, 198, 199, 206, 208, 215, 222, 255, 259; intellectual, 204-05; harmony between—& capital, 205; should understand its own rights, 205; its duties & rights, 206; its power, 206; more valuable than money, 208; its organization on Indian lines, 209; is capital, 209; current coin, 239; should occupy unique place in cultural human family, 373

Labourers, 200, 205, 211, 259, 262

Lancashire, 239

Landlords, 210, 218, 255, 262; have bright future if they become trustees of poor kisans, 262

Language, of law courts should be the language of province, 382

Lathi, 452

Latimer, 164

Law of Love, 423; in international affairs, 455

Law of Majority, has no place in matters of conscience, 423

Lawyers, 200, 201, 204

Legislation, 296

Lenin, 140, 254

Liberty, 145

Life, greater than art, 56; of perfect continence in thought, speech & action necessary for reaching spiritual conception, 272

Linguistic basis, a correct basis for demarcating provinces, 385

Linguistic Provinces, 385
Linguistic distribution of provinces, 385

- Lionel Curtis, 363
 Literacy, not the end of education, 371
 Literary education, 378
 Literature, 309, 384
 Living Force, 253
 Lok Sevak Sangh, 352
 Lord Buddha, 420
 Love, 188, 191, 323, 381, 398; between husband & wife takes one nearer to God; 279
- MACHINE**, 234, 235, 236, 237, 372
 Machinery, 56, 231, 235, 236, 238, 239, 370; Gandhiji objects to its craze, 235; does not want such—as displaces labour, 236; large-scale—concentrated wealth in the hands of one man, 280; Gandhiji opposed to destructive—, 296
- Madras, 308
 Maffeking Day, 76
Mahabharata, 80, 411, 446; a permanent history of man, 446
 Maharastrians, 386
 Mahatma, 11-13, 290
 Mahatmaship, 11, 12
 Mahavir, 23
 Mahomed, the prophet, 23, 50, 63, 98, 99, 100, 180, 233, 399, 450
 Malaya State, 433
 Mammon, 233, 234;—worship, 231
 Man, *passim*; superior to system, 14; as guardian of his self-respect & liberty, 22; cannot know whole truth, 44, 45; can follow only relative truth, 45; maker of his destiny, 71; half of woman, 297; should learn to give place to woman, 297; more prostitute than woman, 305; no fullest development of man without knowledge of reading & writing, 378; his social nature distinguishes him from brute creation, 439; his actions defy analysis in terms of non-violence, 444
- Manchuria, 454
 Mankind, 5, 7, 73, 114, 129, 136, 140, 145, 150, 156, 173; could progress if it comes under sway of Truth & Non-violence, 74; Gandhiji identifies himself with—, 102; is one, so that all are equally subject to moral law, 439
- Mantras*, 194, 276, 386
 Manual Work, 309
 Marie Stopes, 286
 Marriage, a sacrament imposing discipline upon partners, 272; for the satisfaction of sexual appetite is *Vyabhichara*, 278; a natural thing in life, 278; its true purpose is intimate friendship & companionship between two, 279; married stage is a stage of discipline, 280; should not be a matter of arrangement between parents for money, 298
- Martyr, 140
 Martyrdom, Gandhiji's readiness for—, 15
 Mass Production, 56, 237
 Max Muller, 449

- Maya*, 50, 74
Mayne, 371
Means & ends, 132
Mecca, 180
Mechanization, 236; good when hands are few, 236
Medina, 180
Meditation, 88
Medium of instruction, 382
Meerabai, 180
Mental training, 61
Militarism, 347
Militarization, 156, 158
Military dictatorship, 156
Military expenditure, 153
Military power, 62
Military Service, to refuse— is not enough, 444; is a symptom of the disease which is deepening, 445
Milton, 384
Ministers, to be fearless in the performance of duty, 355; ministership not to be created for the sake of conciliating interests, 355
Minorities, 332
Miracles, 75-76
Mobocracy, 346
Mohan, 282, 284
Moksha, 7, 13, 54, 425; consists in perfect deliverance from the body, 24
Moral Code, 39, 148
Moral Government, 96, 103
Moral loss, 152
Moral progress, 102
Morality, 312; true—consists in finding out true path, 485
Mortification, of flesh, 36
Moses, 450
Mosque, 104, 105, 106
Mother tongue, natural for the development of man's mind, 383
Movement, anti-untouchability, 107
Mozambique, 329
Municipalities, 396
Murder, 160
Music, 56, 57; before mosques, 401
Muslims, Mussalmans, Mahomedans, 227, 247, 318, 328, 331, 332, 333, 343, 376, 390, 398, 400, 401, 402, 411, 419, 473, 494; vast majority are converts to Islam, 332
Muslim League, 331
Mussolini, 454
NAGRI SCRIPT, 383
Nai Talim, 375; in—basic craft to serve as medium of education & must answer the test of universality, 380; best done through handicrafts, 380; is a blend of craft, art, health & education, 380; not dependent on money, 381; designed for the wholly self-supporting, 380; stands for the art of living, 380; in—teachers & pupils have to produce in the act of teaching & learning, 380; *see* Education & Basic education
Nanak, 23, 191
Napoleon, 325
Natal, 323, 442
National creed, 154
National culture, 107

National dress, 471
 National industries, 383
 National life, 134, 154
 Nationalism, 322, 401, 436; Indian, 435; not evil, 436
 Nationality, 103
 Nationalization of key & principal industries, 250
 Nature Cure, 82, 392-6; implies ideal mode of life, 393; implies cheaper & simplest treatment, 393; means change for the better, 394; solely designed for villages, 395
 Navy, 156
 Nazi rule, 326
 Nero, 320
 New Delhi, 257
 New Testament, 68, 146
 Newspapers, Press compared to torrent of water, 39; becoming people's Bible, Koran, Zend-Avesta & the Bhagavad Gita, 481; should be read for study of facts, 481; should give nothing but facts to the readers, 481
 Newton, 27, 112
Nirvana, 88, 96, 97; compares it to Ramarajya, 327
 Non-co-operation, 21, 27, 133, 179, 180, 181, 182, 205, 216, 344, 356, 374, 445; its religious basis, 179; its ethics, 181-2; its root in love, 183; as a duty, 184; in preference to continued physical compulsion is a distinct progress, 455
 Non-possession, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192

Non-violence, 10, 24, 27, 28, 45, 46, 61, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 119, 121, 122, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 131, 132, 134, 137, 143, 144, 147, 155, 156, 157, 158, 171, 172, 181, 183, 194, 200, 209, 210, 216, 220, 244, 248, 249, 253, 255, 261, 265, 271, 291, 316, 332, 335, 343, 347, 348, 349, 355, 359, 367, 370, 371, 374, 404, 414, 429, 430, 443, 444, 447, 449, 451, 454, 456; for practice by groups, communities & nations, 24; means conscious suffering, 27; its gospel, 112-21; its character, 113-14; as the end of all religions, 116; presupposes ability to strike, 119; no cover for cowardice, 119-20; is active force, 121-2; its power, 121-5; is mightiest force, 122, 123; its test, 124; training for, 125-7; of the brave, 126-7; its cultivation may require many births, 127; its universality, 128-9; its application, 128-30; for every walk of life, 129; its use on mass-scale, 109; can effectively control & guide power, 132-3; out of India's strength & power, 152; of the brave, 155-7; training in— for the brave, 157; the law of —, 263; is an effort to abandon violence, 265; the history of religion is full of examples of non-violence, 271; no— in factory civilization, 309; the

- law of —, 375; its imperfectness, 425-6; unless world adopts — it will spell certain suicide for mankind, 450; means world peace, 458; structure of world federation can be raised on the foundation of non-violence, 460;
- Non-violent economy, 263-66
- Non-violent non-co-operation, 180, 246; should have its root in love, 180; has nothing in common with historical freedom struggle of West, 182; surest means of protecting poor, 271
- Non-violent rebellion, 292
- Non-violent resistance, 158
- Non-violent society, 130-33, 269; could have only ideal of equal distribution, 269
- Non-violent State, 134-7, 159
- Non-violent Swaraj, 135-6
- Non-violent system, not possible without narrowing gulf between rich & poor, 257
- Non-violent technique, 151
- Non-violent way, 28-30, 156, 157; to destroy capitalism, not capitalists, 257
- OCCUPATION**, 109
- Old Testament, 146-7
- Ordeals, 20, 33, 54
- Ormuzd, 79, 180
- PACIFISM**, Pacifists; true pacifist a true Satyagrahi, 458; have to live their lives in strict accord with Sermon on the Mount, 458; should refuse to do anything with war, 458
- Pairs of Opposites, 19
- Pakistan, 327, 328, 332, 333, 360, 402, 434; its demand non-Islamic, 331
- Pancha*, 222
- Panchayat*, *Panchayats*; 222, 251, 340, 371, 376; its voice is God's voice, 341; should revive honesty & industry, 375; can work through the law of their making, 375
- Panchayat Raj*, 339, 375, 376; in— Panchayat will be obeyed, 375
- Pandavas, 446, 473
- Paradise, 24
- Paradise on Earth, 360
- Pariahs, 244
- Parsees, 247, 375, 402, 419, 473
- Partition, cannot be forcibly resisted if Muslims want it, 332
- Passive Resistance, 146, 157-8, 164
- Patience, 88, 138, 152
- Patriotism, 212; teaches that individual has to die for the family, 435; the same as humanity, 435; includes good of mankind, 436; not exclusive thing, 437
- Pauperism, 110, 141
- Peace, 336; the way of—, 152-3; & war, 316; through love, 455; condition for enduring peace, 455-6; not possible unless Great Powers disarm themselves, 456; through superior violence inevitably leads to atom bomb, 457
- Peace of mind, 85, 87, 97, 117, 129, 146
- Peasants, 362; behind their crude exterior one finds a deep

- reservoir of spirituality, 362;
 European — uninterested in
 things spiritual, 362
 Penances, 31, 63
 Perfection, 14, 17, 18, 52, 57,
 66, 67, 79
 Peshawar, 452
 Phidias, 57
 Physicians, 235
 Pilgrim's Progress, 308
Pinjrapoles, 398
 Planning, 244; real— consists in
 the best utilization of the whole
 man-power of India & dis-
 tribution of raw material, 245
 Plymouth brother, 93
 Poets, 200, 334
 Poles, 148, 454, 455
 Police Force, 158-9
 Politics, 11, 13, 44, 101-03; a part
 of man's being, 310; divorced
 from religion has absolutely
 no meaning, 310
 Political Independence, 315; means
 removal of control of the British
 Army in every shape &
 form, 315; means no imitation
 of the British House of Com-
 mons, 326
 Poorna Swaraj, 318
 Population, 82, its restriction by
 artificial method is a calamity,
 285
 Portugal, 329
 Portuguese Government, 329
 Portuguese Settlements, 328, 329
 Prahlad, 180, 304
 Prayer, 22, 34, 35, 47, 53, 63, 77,
 78, 84, 91, 105
 Pritam, 59
 Private ownership, 135
 Progressive society, 12
 Prohibition, 348, 472
 Proletariat, 251
 Property, 190
 Proselytization, 400
 Prostitution, 302
 Protestant, 106
 Providence, 198, faith in, 224
 Provincial Universities, 385
 Public duty, 5
 Public institutions, should not be
 run on permanent fund, 486
 Public opinion, 343
 Public service, like Caesar's wife,
 must be above suspicion, 486
 Purity, 35, 48, 63; of life is the
 truest art, 56-57; of thought.
 82-83; perfect, 248

 RADIUM, 122
 Raiders, 151, 159
 Railways, not a test of high civili-
 zation, 231
 Rajahs, 375
 Rama, 49, 78, 79, 98, 116, 280,
 290, 293, 326, 397, 450;—and
 Rahim one and the same, 326
 Ramakrishna, 191
 Ramanama, 80-83, 87, 273, 276,
 395; as curative power, 81-82;
 is in Gandhiji's heart for all
 the twenty-four hours, 80
 Ramanuja, 79
 Ramarajya, 268, 326, 327; means
 Divine Raj, 326; excludes re-
 placement of British Army by
 national army of occupation,
 326; not possible in the State of
 iniquitous inequalities, 327;

- ensures equal rights alike to
princes & paupers, 326; means
Kingdom of God, 409
- Ramayana*, of Tulasidas, 80; of
Valmiki, 80
- Rationalism, rationalists, 63
- Ravana, 73, 75, 301, 346
- Ray Chaudhuri, 475
- Ray, Prafulla Chandra, 411
- Real progress, impossible without
large army of self-sacrificing
& determined workers, 320
- Reality, manyness of, 79
- Reason, 198; its limitations, 63-
64
- Red Cross Organization, 446
- Reducing to Zero, 31, 42, 60
- Relative Morality, 66
- Religion, 44, 59, 63, 66, 161, 229,
253, 303, 399; its meaning, 64;
all are partially true & false,
67; & politics, 101-3;
its inculcation alone would re-
move caste distinctions, 110; its
fulfilment requires non-posses-
sion, 191; all religions should
have full & equal place, 373;
world's existence depends on,
460
- Religious education, 69, 70; as
necessary as secular one, 69
- Renunciation, 75, 95, 229; the
secret of happy life, 192
- Repentance, 77
- Resistance, 128, 144, 145, 221; of
aggression, 142-52; non-violent
resistance, 149
- Retaliation, 23, 61, 114, 121, 126,
145
- Revenge, 139
- Revolution, Revolutionary, 94, 139,
140, 141, 142, social —, 199
- Rich, should be trustees of their
property, 199
- Ridley, 167
- Rights, 227, 290
- Rishi*, 27, 112
- Robinson Crusoe, 439
- Roman Catholic Church, 330
- Roman Culture, 105
- Rome, 241, 349
- Romeos, 293
- Ruskin, 6, 207, 241, 475, 483
- Russia, 137, 141, 164, 242, 245,
255
- Russian type, 255
- SACRIFICE**, 198, 202
- Sadavrat*, 195
- Saintliness, 3, 20
- Saints, living illustrations of Sup-
reme Law, 418
- Salvation, 7, 58, 64, 129
- Salvation Army People, 363
- Samagra Gramseva, 368
- Samskaras*, 4, 78, 488
- Samurai, 218
- Sanitation, 374
- Sannyas, Sannyasi, 4
- Sarvodaya, 6, 223
- Satan, 73, 75, 140, 231
- Satya*, 167, 177; *see* Truth
- Satyagraha, 27, 37, 39, 117, 121,
149, 151, 154, 171, 172, 173,
176, 177, 179, 181, 184, 228,
250, 347, 348, 374, 440, 446;
its character, 166-7; is a means

- of vindicating truth by self-suffering, 167; an art of living, 168; a science in the making, 168; a process of educating public opinion, 176; its conditions for success, 176; superior to armed resistance, 176; admits no violence, 178; the law of love, 183; all its laws are not laid down, 256
- Satyagrahi, 34, 166, 169, 170, 171, 172, 175, 181, 186, 461
- Savitri, 292
- Scavenger, Scavengers, 200, 201
- Scriptures, 76, 111; laid down rules as maxims of life, 303
- Searcher after Truth, 8
- Secrecy, 19; all sins are committed in, 489; a sin more especially in politics, 489
- Sectarianism, 26, 103
- Seeker after Truth, 6, 13, 43, 87
- Self-control, for the whole of humanity, 290
- Self-deception, 134, 147
- Self-defence, 61, 144, 164
- Self-discipline, 319
- Self-effacement, 139
- Self-Government, 20; means continuous effort to be independent of Government control, 317
- Self-help, 69
- Self-immolation, 145
- Self-pity, 120
- Self-purification, 31; identification with everything impossible without—, 489; means— in all walks of life, 489
- Self-realization, 46, 54, 55, 76
- Self-restraint, 117, 118, 272; possible if one learns that indulgence is harmful, 289
- Self-rule, 319
- Self-sacrifice, 20, 27, 61
- Self-suppression, 61
- Sermon on the Mount, 69, 94, 198, 233
- Service, 7, 13, 15, 17, 22, 25, 36, 43, 52-3, 95, 202, 418
- Sex education, should have conquest & sublimation of passion as its aim, 300
- Sexual instruction, necessary for controlling passion, 291
- Sexual life, regulation of, 5
- Sexual science, 299
- Shakespeare, 384
- Shankara, 191, 415
- Shastras, 38, 296, 297
- Sheppards, Dick, 418
- Shudra, Shudras, 107, 109, 267; *see* untouchables
- Sikh, Sikhs, 247, 318, 333, 376, 473
- Silence, 86; its efficacy, 89-90
- Silent communion, 88
- Simplicity, 82; beauty & art in, 350; is the essence of universality, 490
- Singer's Sewing Machine, 253; is also perfunctory, 375
- Sita, 290, 292, 293, 297, 302, 375; the ideal of a wife, 280
- Slavery, 150, 313
- Smithery, 200
- Smoking, a greater curse than drink, 493
- Smritis, 297
- Smuts, General, 124, 181, 217

Snakes, tigers, are God's answer to poisonous wicked thoughts, 428

Socialism, 243, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 254, 256, 268; Western—, 245; Scientific—, 246

Social justice, unattainable by force, 246

Social order, 110; of Gandhiji's conception will be based predominantly on Charkha & all it implies, 251

Social reform, a tougher business than political reform, 493

Social service, 200

Socialist, Socialists, 246, 248, 259, 307, 327; Gandhiji's difference with them in methods of work, 246; and Communists accentuate hatred, 248

Socialistic order, 249, 251-3

Socialistic society, 248

Socialistic theory, 259

Society, classless, 256; to be based on Truth & Non-violence, 252

Socrates, 57, 164

Solon, 474

Song Celestial, the, 191

Soul, 231, 235, 271, 324, 477; grows in strength as flesh is subdued, 35; the same for all men & women, 419

Soul Force, 115, 151, 165, 422; means love force, 422

South Africa, 10, 56, 85, 89, 120, 121, 162, 181, 217, 241, 242, 406, 440, 483

South African Government, its white policy holds seeds of world war, 440

South African Satyagraha, 149

Soviet Rule of Russia, 326

Spain, 454

Spaniards, 148

Spartans, 328

Spindles, 236

Spinner, spinners, 236

Spinners' Clubs, 69

Spinning, 225, 367; as penance or sacrament, 403; its universalization with full knowledge will drive out all inertia from the country, 405

Spinning-wheel, 139, 195, 197, 237, 370, 404; enables one to identify with crores, 403; stands for all including the poorest, 403; saving of India & the world lies in, 404; its message wider than its circumference, 404

Spinning-wheel Movement, an attempt to displace machinery, 238; scientific study of— will lead us to Sociology, 407

Spiritual bankruptcy, 69

Spiritual Force, 83

Spiritual Law, affects economic, social & political fields, 223

Spiritual training, means education of heart, 378

Srinagar, 327

Starvation, 85, 139

State, States, 240, 244, 245, 248, 250, 255, 261, 266, 268, 317, 332, 333, 343, 347, 370, 374, 402, 438; as a trustee, 135; ideal—, 204; represents concentrated violence, 134-5; ideal—204; better minds

- desire for federation of States, 438
 State Church, 80
 State Ownership, 135
 Stephenson, 235
 Sterilization, its imposition inhuman, 290; Gandhiji would not mind voluntary—in case of man, since he is aggressor, 290; law, inhuman, 290
Sthitaprajna, 276
 'Still Small Voice', 14, 31, 49, 89
 Strike, Strikes, 216, 217; and politics, 211; legitimate & illegitimate, 211; should not be resorted to for political ends, 211; symptom of unrest, 211; conditions for its success, 212; economic—should not be mixed with political—, 213; political—213; non-violent—214; and capitalism, 214; sympathetic—, 216
 Students, their life should correspond to the life of a Sannyasi, 382
 Suffering, 18, 27, 74, 78, 81, 88, 98, 107, 113, 121, 139, 140, 143, 149, 152, 154
 Suicide, 16, 154
 Superman, 133
 Superstition, Superstitions, 49, 60, 63, 76, 99, 105, 106
 Suppressed classes, 139
 Suppression, 63
 Surdas, 45
 Swadeshi, 307, 308, 334, 410, 431; poverty due to departure from—in economic & industrial life, 411
 Swaraj, 136, 139, 154, 159, 188, 197, 220, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 342, 364, 370, 405, 435, 487; a Vedic word, 317; means freedom for the meanest of countrymen, 317; real—, 317; to be attained by educating masses to a sense of their capacity, 317; freedom of speech & pen, its foundation, 319; abandonment of fear of death, 319; is voluntary act of continuous self-sacrifice, 320; means sum-total of the swaraj of individuals, 321; of his conception would try to keep intact genius of her civilization, 321
 Switzerland, 452
 Swordsmanship, 119
 Symbolism, 104
 TAMILIANS, 381
 Temples, 86, 104-06
 Terrorism, 138-42, 313
 Theft, 192
 Thermopylæ, 452
 Thoreau, 134, 345
 Thought-world, 23
Tilaks, 388
 Timbuctoo, 214
 Time, 334
 Toleration, mutual, 67, 93, 114; even among professors of same creed, 445
 Tolstoy, 7, 146, 164, 198, 291, 384, 475, 492; practised what he preached, 476

- Totalitarian State**, 132
Trade guilds, 110
Transmigration, 116
Trappist Monastery, 89
Tree Worship, 145
Tribes, 92
Trust, Trustees, 21, 60, 111, 135, 257-63, 267, 270, 272; should hold riches on behalf of poor, 260; in non-violent society, their commission would be regulated, 261; Gandhiji does not recognize right of private ownership of property, 262
Trusteeship, provides means of transforming present capitalist order of society into egalitarian one, 262; State-regulated, 263; under it rich will be left in possession of their wealth of which they will use what they reasonably require and would act as trustees for the remaining, 270
Truth, 3, 4, 6, 11, 16, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 32, 33, 37, 39, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 60, 61, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72, 73, 80, 89, 93, 101, 133, 135, 136, 155, 167, 171, 188, 189, 193, 197, 200, 224, 248, 249, 266, 277, 282, 290, 294, 296, 316, 324, 415, 420, 423, 425, 428, 447, 457, 465, 474, 481, 495; relative & absolute, 42, 43; its Gospel, 42-47; is God, 4, 47-54, 197, 249; its aspirant cannot keep out of any field, 44; comes prior to art, 56; means that we have to rule our life by the law of Truth, 304; & righteousness, 326; represents moral & spiritual force, 447; constitutes mightiest force in the world, 447; *see* Satya
Truthfulness, 153
Tukaram, 203
Tulsidas, 46, 80, 179, 366
Turkey, 141
UNCONVENTIONALITY, 38
Union Government, 151, 327; did right in rushing troops to Kashmir, 327
Union Jack, 473
United Nations' Organization, 328, 441
Unto This Last, 198, 225, 241; deeply impresses the author, 6
Untouchables, 107, 203
Untouchability, 107-111, 250, 314, 374, 376, 396; its removal, 368
Untruth, 29, 42, 57, 65
Upanishads, 60, 94
Urdu, 383; Urdu script, 402
Utopia, Utopian, 214, 252, 372, 458
VAIDYAS, 397, 470
Varna, 109
Vaishya, 107, 109
Varnashrama Dharma, 108, 109, 110, 116
Vedant, 74
Vedas, 67, 68, 79, 95, 98
Vegetarianism, 465, 468; priceless gift of Hinduism, 464
Vengeance, 117, 119
Vested Interest, 135

Village, Villages, 82, 131, 361, 362, 364, 370, 375, 395; their disintegration, 244; village republics with full power, 251; blood of villages is the cement with which edifice of cities is built, 363; life must not become copy of city life, 363; if villages perish, India will perish, 369; republics, 371; should be self-sustained & capable of managing their affairs, 371; in—government would be conducted by *panchayats*, 374; village republics not to be poverty-stricken, 375

Village Economics, was once organized on non-violent basis, 265

Village Industries, 348; their revival, 244

Villagers, 361, 362, 363, 370, 395; should develop high degree of skill & artistic talent, 368

Village Service, All-round, 365; *see* Samagra Gramseva

Village Swaraj, 374

Violence, 20, 27, 29, 37, 65, 112, 114, 115, 117, 118, 119, 126, 131, 132, 138-42, 153, 246, 448, 457; defensive & offensive, 148; its sublimation, 158

Virgin Mary, 105, 106

Vows, 105

WAGE, WAGES, 206; without work is theft, 210

Wallace, 233

War, Wars, 146, 148, 152, 153, 225, 445, 446, 447, 450, 451, 457; its alternative, 155; the law of jungle, 170;—Conference, 323; unmitigated evil, 444; unmixed evil, 445; author's resistance to, 445; inhuman exploitation of so-called weaker races, as the cause of modern—, 446; knows no laws, except that of might, 448

Washington, 140

Wealth, its owners will have to choose between class war & voluntarily converting themselves into trustees, 261

Wellington, 27, 112

West, 19, 20, 28, 30, 163, 230, 234, 242, 255, 292, 321, 336, 373, 390, 396, 419, 426, 433, 436, 456, 465, 484, 488, 496; the spirit of the—, 426; imitation of—, 97, 153-5; its cultural domination, 432; pining for wisdom, 457

Western Civilization, 336

Western Culture, 432

Western exploitation, 316

Western Medicine, is like black magic, 395

Western Natives, 153, 154, 242

Western Socialism, 245

Western Socialists, 246

Western Superiority, 419

White Man's burden, 441

Widowhood, voluntary, 298; imposed by religion is unbearable yoke, 259

Wife, man's companion & help-mate, 280

Woman, Women, 277, 278, 289, 290-91, 292, 293, 296, 297, 298, 301; Gandhiji never looked upon her as object of satisfaction, 277; artificial methods have further degraded—, 286; a prey to man's sexual desire, 289; if — learns to say 'no' to husband, shall have no birth-control problem, 289; as object of man's lust, 290; embodiment of sacrifice, suffering, humility, faith & knowledge, 290; a libel to call her weaker sex, 291; Gandhiji advises — not to become slaves of men's whims & fancies, 291; has greater moral power than man, 251; is personification of self-sacrifice, 251; companion of man gifted with equal mental capacity, 292; regarded by man as tool, 293; must rely on their own strength, 293; special custodians of purity in religious life, 293; proper education of—, 293; additional burden of maintaining family should not fall on her, 294; developed inferiority complex because of man's dominance, 294; dominated by man since ages, 294; her mission to exhibit *ahimsa* at its highest & best, 294; queen of household, 294; seers among men have recog-

nized woman's equal status, 294; should transfer her love to whole of humanity, 294; superior to man for the courage of self-sacrifice, 294; is degradation of man and—, that she should be asked to forsake hearth & shoulder rifle, 295; her duties of motherhood requires qualities which man need not possess, 295; is incarnation of *ahimsa*, 295; mistress of house, 295; non-violence comes more easily to her, 296; G. uncompromising in matters of women's rights, 296; as voters, 297; exhorts women to resort to civil rebellion against all undesirable & unworthy restraints, 297; workers, 297

Work, 195, 202, gospel of, 203, 204; intellectual, 204

Workers, 11, 133

World, 46, 48, 53, 60, 63, 67, 76, 226

YAJNA, 228, 229

Yudhishtira, the prince of righteousness, 241

ZAMINDAR, ZAMINDARS, 227, 250, 251, 259, 261, 262, 375; their conversion, 218-9

Zamindari, 262, 375; evil, 219

Zoroaster, 23, 93, 98, 399, 450

Zulu Rebellion, 323, 442

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